PRIVATE EYE

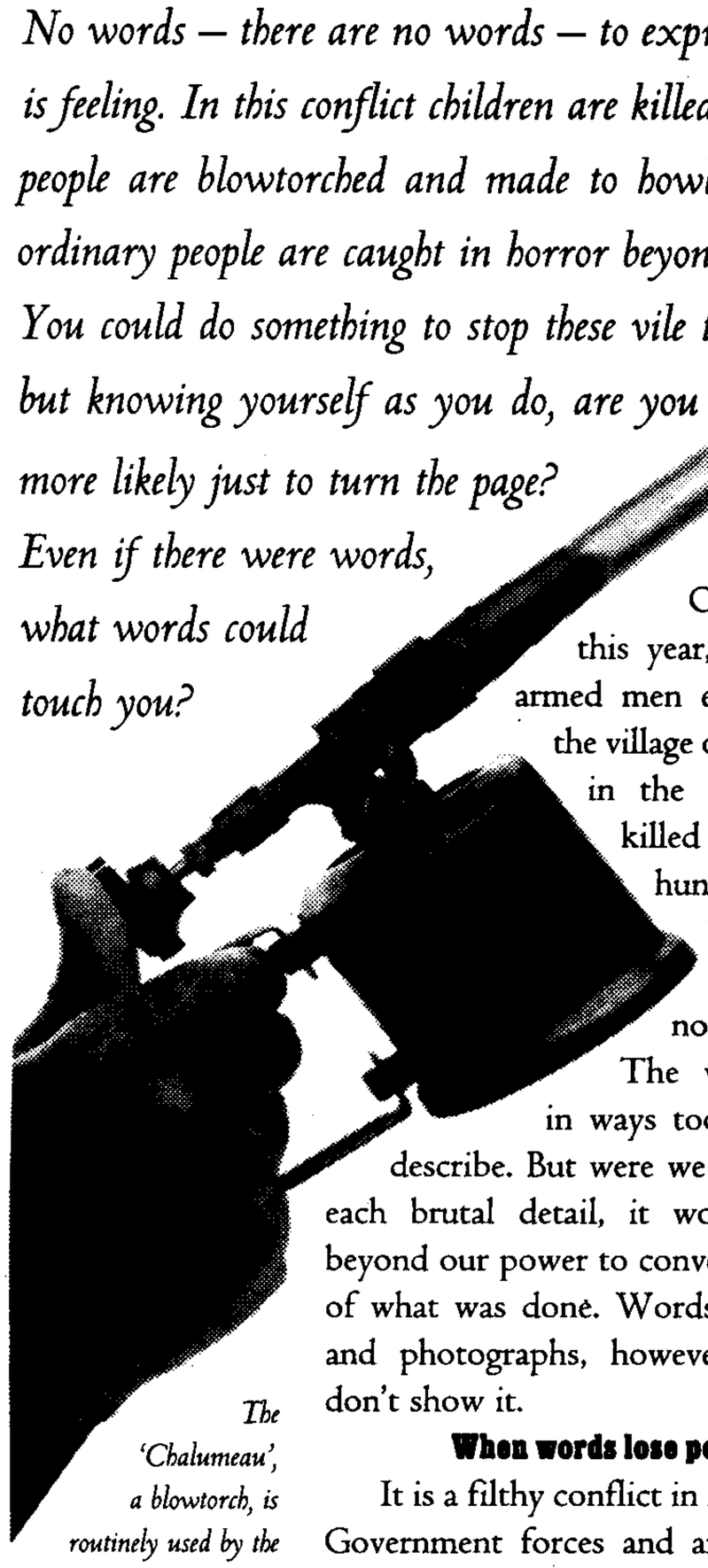
No. 943
Friday
6 Feb. '98

£1

YES, IT'S WAR!

Write your own bloody headline.

No words – there are no words – to express what this Algerian woman is feeling. In this conflict children are killed in front of their parents, people are blowtorched and made to howl like bagpipes, and ordinary people are caught in horror beyond imagining. You could do something to stop these vile things, but knowing yourself as you do, are you more likely just to turn the page? Even if there were words, what words could touch you?



The 'Chalumeau', a blowtorch, is routinely used by the Algerian security forces to make suspects 'sing'.

Other page: Distraught survior of a massacre carried out at Sidi Rais village by an armed group.

On 27 August this year, a group of armed men entered Rais, the village of the woman in the picture, and killed about three hundred people. They did not spare women nor children.

The victims died in ways too hideous to describe. But were we to catalogue each brutal detail, it would still be beyond our power to convey the horror of what was done. Words can't say it and photographs, however gruesome, don't show it.

When words lose power.

It is a filthy conflict in Algeria. Both Government forces and armed groups have committed atrocities.

The Government uses the atrocities to justify its massive repression of human rights, the armed groups use the repression to justify their atrocities.

The woman from Rais got caught in the middle.

We don't know what sorrowful loss she suffered, whether she saw her family murdered, her baby dashed to its death, her small daughter disembowelled, her mother's head rolling in the dust.

All of these things have happened, if not to this woman, to others just as uninvolved, helpless and anguished. The words on the picture opposite are taken from the opening paragraph of Amnesty International's latest report on Algeria. We have become used to seeing words like these in our newspapers. Shocking headlines no longer touch us. We're not moved, we resent being manipulated. Experience says that you'll read this page, turn over and forget it, because this is how you, like the rest of us, have learned to cope with the clamour of ads.

Listen to what the children said.

Two children, sisters of 11 and 13, spoke about the night their parents were killed.

"We woke up at the noise; some armed men were hitting father with a shotgun. They pushed father into the kitchen and the others took mum out into the courtyard and tied her hands. They cut her throat. The other men called from inside the house and the one who slaughtered mum shouted: "Wait I'm finishing". We pulled mum into the house and closed her eyes and covered her with a blanket, and also covered father; he had also had his throat cut. We cried and screamed."

Reader, wake up. This isn't a game of words. It isn't some clever advertising agency trying to score a 'creative' coup. It's a plea, a big desperate one, for help.

You can make a big difference.

We need you. At this very second, even as you are reading this, someone is being murdered, tortured, or made to "disappear". Someone is being thrown in jail without trial. Someone is being raped, someone's child is being killed.

You could do a great deal to help these people. Why won't you?

Is it right to murder, torture, or imprison people for their religion, the colour of their skin or beliefs?

You may say 'no', but unless you stand up for human rights, you might as well say 'yes'.

Amnesty International was founded on the idea that ordinary people *can* make a difference in the world, *can* help to stop murder, torture and other abuse of human rights. Since our foundation in 1961, we have proved over and over and over that we *can* help.

Amnesty is international.

Do you dislike the idea of western liberals laying down the moral law to the rest of the world? Good, so do we. Amnesty International is a worldwide organisation with members in just about every country on earth.

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And people in that deadly danger are standing up for *your* human rights, whether or not you choose to recognise the fact.

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After the Second World War, the world's nations signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Since then every single one of them has at some time broken its promise to defend and not abuse human rights.

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Yours.

But only you can convince yourself that you want to stand up for other people's human rights.

Are you a do-nothing? Or will you make a difference?

Only you know the answer, only you can find the words, only you can sign your name below.

Amnesty International: working worldwide for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture, extra-judicial executions, "disappearances" and the death penalty.

Yes, it's time I joined Amnesty International. Here's my annual subscription fee:

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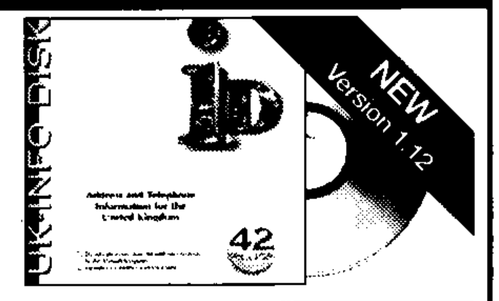

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Gnome

CHANGES are announced this week at *The Gnomedependent*, the flagship of my newspaper empire.

Mr Andrew Marred is replaced as editor of the *Gnomedependent* by Mrs Geoffrey Boycott who will also edit the sister paper *The Gnomedependent on Sunday*.

Mrs Boycott arrives in the editorial office with a formidable reputation as a campaigning journalist. In recent issues she has courageously battled to prove that the *Gnomedependent* is perfectly harmless — apart from giving the reader a mild feeling of drowsiness and mental disorientation.

Now her task will be to turn these two great papers into one 7-day operation. The Gnomedependent will appear on Monday and print continuously till Sunday, when it will be closed down.

The *Gnomedependent:* "It is — But Not For Long!"

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
The Old Hot Air Balloon
Somewhere Over Albania

"Nice legs, shame about the tapes..."

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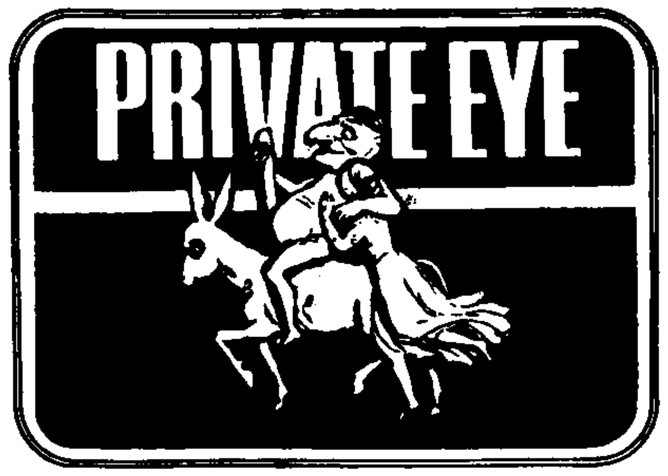


COLOUR SECTION

THE muted response on the Tory frontbench to John Prescott's dramatic 28 January announcement about the high-speed rail link to the Channel tunnel could be explained by the desperate, and fulfilled, hope that no one would mention the chairman of the Tory party, Lord Parkinson.

No one is more responsible for the rail link debacle than the debonair peer. As secretary of state for transport in 1989 he vetoed a detailed plan by the publicly-owned British Rail to build the link by 2002. He, his heroine the prime minister Margaret Thatcher and his minister of state Michael Portillo insisted that private finance should be involved. Earnest discussions followed with private construction companies, all of whom concluded they could not build the link without massive public subsidy. Thatcher and Parkinson stood firm. There would be no such subsidy. The talks collapsed.

The new administration under John Major took a more realistic view. By 1994 three private consortia had emerged to challenge for the rail link contract. All were promised huge subsidies from the taxpayer as well as lucrative former British Rail property assets, notably the new terminus at Waterloo.

The favourite for the contract was Eurorail, a consortium headed by the Tory government's favourite construction company Trafalgar House. The chairman of Eurorail was, er, Lord Parkinson. When the contract was finally awarded, Eurorail was pipped at the post by London & Continental Railways.

Eurorail was effectively disbanded and Parkinson departed for other boardrooms. LCR now reckons it can't do the job for the £3bn of taxpayers' money already promised, and asked Prescott for another £1.2bn. He refused and muttered darkly about the whole project being taken back into public ownership. At the same time, however, according to a *Financial Times* report on 1 February, the government "has approached" a new company "to see if it could help to rescue the high speed Channel tunnel rail link". The name of the company? Eurorail.

Eurorail, now headed by the Norwegian company which bought Trafalgar House, is very keen. If it gets the contract it lost in 1996, and re-constitutes itself, who better to lead it than the man responsible for the whole fiasco in the first place, the celebrated share-dealer himself, Lord Parkinson?

THE call by home secretary Jack Straw for "urgent action" to deal with the grotesque costs of early retirement and sickness in the police is to some extent a tribute to the work over the years of former Metropolitan police inspector John Kenny.

Mr Kenny complained about his colleagues' ridiculous sickness and early retirement rate for more than 10 years. He carefully collected statistics and passed them to the authorities. He was a great help to the national audit office (NAO) when it compiled its 1997 report exposing the appalling waste of taxpayers' money on sick policemen. In 1995 Mr Kenny sent more figures on the subject to Jack Straw, then opposition home affairs spokesman, who warmly thanked him.

Not everyone has shared Mr Straw's and the NAO's enthusiasm for Mr Kenny's work on this matter. In May 1990, Inspector Kenny went before a promotion selection board and was unsuccessful. The report of the president of the board congratulated Mr Kenny for being "brimful of ideas, many of which were radical, but refreshingly original". On the other hand, the report went on, "he appears somewhat over-emphatic about dealing with sickness. The matter was raised once as a question, but returned to almost spontaneously on a number of occasions by the candidate... The Board was concerned that in his quest for efficiency and innovation he has wandered too far into the conceptual and away from the practical".

Mr Kenny continued to be turned down for promotion and retired in 1995 after 25 years service without a day off sick. The president of the promotion board which turned down John Kenny has prospered. He is Commander Barry Moss, now head of the Metropolitan police special branch.

THE rumour that the government of Margaret Thatcher, stuffed with "names" at Lloyd's, intervened to prevent any prosecution for fraud at the London insurance market was set off by a letter on 3 December to a name (Mr John Taylor, of Beccles, Suffolk) from Ian Hay Davison, chief executive of Lloyd's from 1983 to 1986.

"During my time at Lloyd's," he wrote, "I had a series of lengthy interviews with the Serious Fraud Office concerning the various frauds. Regrettably, the government, on policy grounds, decided not to prosecute any of those involved and no successful prosecutions were brought. I was, and remain, extremely indignant and disappointed about this."

Mr Davison was said to be particularly upset by the use of ink eradicator by key personnel at Lloyd's to alter the figures in awkward documents.

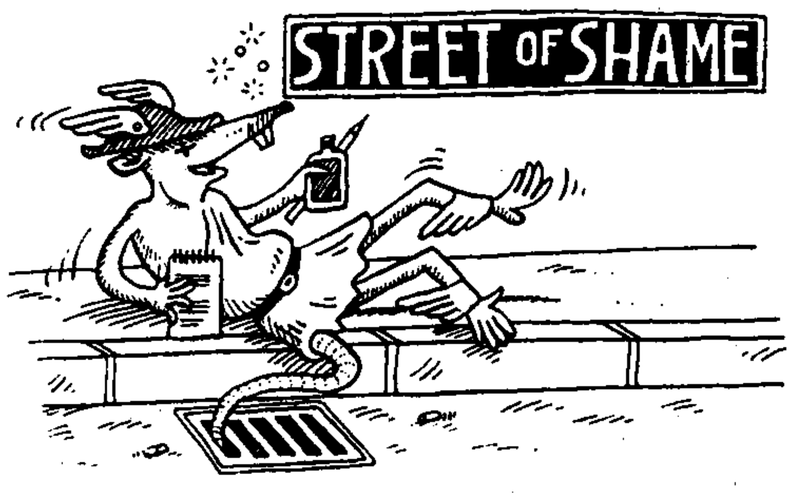
WHEN the job of president to the industrial tribunals was advertised by the previous lord chancellor, two "guidelines" for the post were that the president should be aged 60 or under and he or she should be based in London.

A number of people responded and the list was being considered when the new lord chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, took office after the election. He ordered that the "field be widened", and so the post was readvertised. A number of new people applied, including His Honour Judge John Prophet, 66, who lives in Leeds. He got the job.

FACT TO REMEMBER: In 1976 John Prophet was senior lecturer at the faculty of law at Leeds University.

ANOTHER FACT: In 1976 a young lawyer, Geoffrey Hoon, was taken on as a lecturer in law at Leeds University. Mr Hoon is now a Labour MP and a junior minister in the lord chancellor's department. A spokeswoman for the department confirmed that "Mr Hoon is well acquainted with Judge Prophet, but their paths have not crossed for several years".

"Lights! Cameras! Military action!"



NIGEL Pratt-Dumpster's record as a racing tipster is as distinguished as readers of his "Diary" would expect.

In October he proudly told *Racing Post* readers that one of his "horses to follow" for the coming National Hunt season was Aardwolf, owned by his wife Lady Camilla and trained by Old Etonian Charlie Brooks.

Aardwolf's record since then is: fell; unseated rider; unplaced; pulled up.

TURBULENT times at the *Sun*. First, deputy editor Neil "Wolfman" Wallis goes off to edit the *Sunday People* and *Sun* editor Stuart Higgins announces that he is "absolutely thrilled" — before slapping an injunction on Wallis to force him back to Wapping.

Then Sue Carroll, the mascara-loving associate editor (features), walks out in a huff when she is told that Ian Monk is joining the paper as... associate editor (features). Pausing only to consult her lawyers, she heads straight for Canary Wharf — where Piers Morgan clears the *Mirror*'s front page to introduce "briliant new columnist Sue Carroll".

Her brilliant column kicks off with the news that the Great Bustard is officially extinct. "Little Bustards," she notes, "continue to thrive. Their natural habitat is in the office. They can be spotted by their grey plumage, distinctive shrill squawk and their vicious tendency to peck other species in the back when they're not looking... I've recently had an experience with a Little Bustard and it was very frightening." Could she, by any chance, be referring to Stuart "Higgy" Higgins?

Meanwhile, the great visionary Garry Bushell has waltzed off on a 10-date tour of the USA with his rock band The Gonads, although how the Yanks will take to jingoistic ditties like "England's Glory" is anyone's guess. "If we are lucky," a loyal colleague observes, "we may never see him again. If we are unlucky, this regression to childhood will last as long as his magical career as one half of The Great Bushelli and Fleur..."

SUNDAY *Times* writer A.A. Gill may live to regret his attack on the Welsh as "stunted, bigoted, dark, ugly, pugnacious little trolls".

His anti-Welsh tirade has led to the Welsh national press urging its readers not to buy the *Sunday Times*, while his "incitement" has been reported to the Commission for Racial Equality. This is all good publicity for the attention-craving food writer; but not so good is news that one fervent Welsh nationalist has dug up Gill's address in London from the electoral register.

Patriotically, the man in question has sent copies of the address to every Welsh rugby clubhouse with a request for it to be pinned up on noticeboards. One can only guess the sort of nuisance mail the unfortunate hack might now receive.

THE legendary Brendon "Chucky" Parsons edited only a couple of issues of the *People* before moving to the corresponding chair at the *Sunday Mirror* — but he leaves behind his usual legacy of cock-ups and clangers.

His first front-page "scoop" at the *People* — billed as a huge exclusive — was that breakfast TV presenter Eamon Holmes had dumped his mistress and returned to his long-suffering wife. But Chucky's final edition of the *People* as he cleared his desk carried a humiliating apology to the same Mr and Mrs Holmes, plus a confession that the original story was complete cobblers.

While *Sunday Mirror* hacks brace themselves for more of the same, they should be aware that their new boss has an astonishing grasp of foreign events too. At a news conference before leaving the *People* he demanded: "What we doing about Bosnia then?"

There was an uncomfortable silence before he barked: "I suppose you lot don't know what's going on in Bosnia. Well, it's only the bloody Chechens on the rampage against the Russians again."

Parsons also sent a reporter to Devon to seek a new year poem from Ted Hughes, the poet laureate. Hughes finally appeared at his door to tell the hack: "I don't do door-step ditties."

BRIDGET "Death" Rowe, sacked editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, also leaves a dazzling legacy. Only two weeks before her demise she killed a story about condemned men in American prisons because of repetition of the words "Death Row".

"Death" had become so obsessed with the idea that someone was leaking stories to the *Eye* that she ordered *Mirror* security guards to bug the phone of former *Sunday Mirror* crime reporter Kim Sengupta. She was overruled by managing director Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson on the grounds that Sengupta now worked for the *Independent* and this would have upset his editor Andrew Marr (RIP).

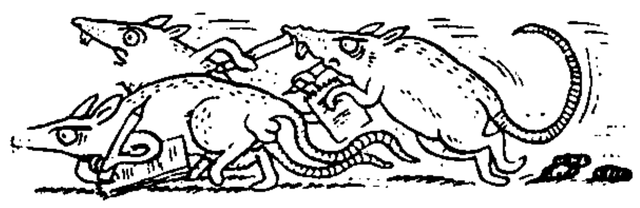
But what will become of Bridget's close friendship with her former *Mirror* chauffeur, Martin Parkinson? Senior colleagues are convinced "Death" is head over heels for big Marty. But this cannot be so for two reasons. One, Martin's father is chauffeur to her dour former boss David Montgomery, who would have been most disapproving. And "Death", who has recently left her husband, went on *Newsnight* not long ago to announce: "I do not sleep outside my marriage."

NEW Mirror Group tabloid supremo Kelvin MacKenzie appears to be editing the *Mirror* on a daily basis while his former protégé, the nominal editor Piers "Boy" Morgan, skulks in his office.

"Boy", who used to roam the editorial floor laughing and joking, is suddenly subdued and seldom seen. MacKenzie, however, is to seen and heard everywhere, terrorizing somnolent *Mirror* hacks. *Mirror* executives preface every remark with "Kelvin wants..."

Even so the paper still can't get anything right. Recently education secretary David Blunkett agreed to a "day-in-the-life" feature about being a blind cabinet minister. Experienced political reporter Sheree Dodd was assigned, but "Boy" decreed that feature writer Helen Withers should take over. The normally mousey hackette was so rude to the minister his spin doctor formally complained and Withers was forced to send a grovelling letter of apology.

Deputy editor Tina Weaver, also in terror of losing her recently acquired status, even rang Blunkett's office to explain: "We're all currently under so much stress, you see." The Blunkett feature, it has now been agreed, will be completed on a written Q&A basis.



THE *Daily Mail* was understandably delighted by its *coup* in finding the Tamworth Two — but rather less delighted that it was *Mail* hackette Barbara Davies who nabbed the porcine fugitives.

Vile sexists that they are, *Mail* executives decided the amply-proportioned Davies was not photogenic enough to pose for the cameras, especially after spending a night in the hedgerows of Malmesbury.

And so, before she was allowed to be interviewed by the world's media, a make-up artist was despatched all the way from London to Wiltshire to "glam her up".

READERS of the *Daily Telegraph*'s property column may be surprised by the amount of space septuagenarian hack Bruce Kinloch has been devoting to Greenwich Group International, one of London's less significant property players.

Only last week a £13.6m deal, pretty small beer in today's market, was given the full Kinloch treatment with supporting picture. The fact that Greenwich employs Kinloch's aspirational son Fergus can only be coincidental.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Earl Spencer... is the acme of caddishness."
— Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Daily Express* 27.11.97

"Robin Cook... was the acme of caddishness."
— Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Daily Mail*, 29.1.98

"Seduction isn't caddish in itself. What's caddish is to boast about it afterwards."
— Geoffrey Wheatcroft on Earl Spencer, *Daily Express*, 27.11.97

"It isn't caddish in itself to sleep with another man's wife. The cad is the man who talks about it afterwards."
— Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Daily Mail*, 29.1.98

"Whatever position you take on the president's sexual appetite — kneeling, missionary or biblical stone-throwing — we can presumably all agree that he was telling the truth at this moment."
— Thomas Sutcliffe, *Independent*, 26.1.98

"Whatever position you take on the President's sexual appetite — kneeling, missionary or biblical stone-throwing — it feels like old news."
— Margaret Vaughn, Glasgow *Herald*, 29.1.98

LOVERS of cheap fiction will have been impressed by Ross Benson's report on his walk into the Valley of Death — or HM Prison Maze, as it's also known.

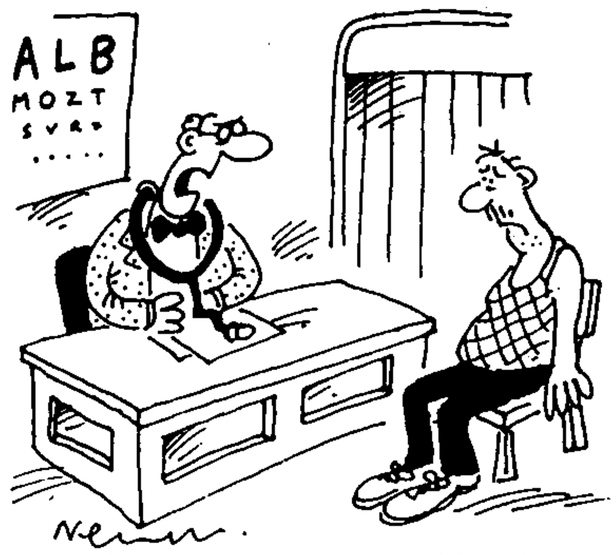
Benson explained how a friendly warder had passed on a terrifying warning to him (using a distinctly un-Ulsterlike phrase) that "we had a gypsy warning that some of the men want to get you. Look out for your back." Bravely Benson ignored the threat and strode forward, prepared to sacrifice his life for the right of *Mail* readers to learn what goes on inside the Maze. Or something like that.

"As the last steel gate closed behind me... I was on the wrong side of the bars of H Block 7... I was not alone, but it felt very much as if I was. The governor Martin Mogg was with me but the prison officer who had escorted us left us at the gate and there was not another to be seen... 'You're in the lions' den now,' a prisoner whispered to me."

Chilling stuff — but who took the photos of Ross posing with a couple of psychopaths/influential figures in the peace process? It wasn't the governor or a warder or any of the hundreds of soldiers present (they were in the car park). So could it have been one of the dozen or so photographers, camera crew and fellow hacks who accompanied Ross into the jail, meaning he wasn't left alone with inmates for even a fraction of a second? 'Fraid so.

"THE 25-year-old supermodel has revealed what many women have suspected all along," wrote hackette Charlotte Edwards in the *Express on Sunday* last month. "If you want to attract an intelligent man you should ditch the plunging neckline and thigh-high skirt and opt for casual, cover-up clothes instead."

Er, not if you want to attract *Telegraph* editor Charles Moore, it seems. Edwards does not follow her own advice, apparently, because her normal office attire is thigh-split mini skirts, five inch heels and figure-hugging tops. And it works. After an interview with "Lord Snooty" she started her new job on the *Tottygraph*'s Peterbore column last week.



"I can make you an average of 2.7% better over the coming year..."

***DAILY MAIL* readers have been receiving a rich diet of salacious detail about Bill Clinton's indiscretions alongside sanctimonious analysis pieces entitled "The United States of Amorality" or "Clinton's Culture of Corruption".**

These diatribes are written by *Mail* reporter Daniel Jeffreys, who notes that Clinton "finds marital fidelity difficult" and calls the affair "a damning indictment of a nation that has abandoned the puritan ideals of its founders".

This moral posturing proved too much for a former partner of Jeffreys, who wrote to the *Mail*'s editor to inform him "that the dinner tables of London ring loud with scornful laughter whenever his by-line is attached to articles on blissful family life". Her scorn arises because Jeffreys has "at least two wives" behind him as well as a case in the family courts over maintenance for his child. What next from the *Daily Mail*, asks the correspondent: Geoffrey Boycott on how to avoid confrontation in relationships?

MARTIN CLARKE, thuggish young editor of the *Scotsman* appointed by thuggish old editor-in-chief Andrew Neill, has given yet another demonstration of his charming management style.

Arriving in a tired and emotional state at Po-Na-Na, a late-night haunt favoured by many of Edinburgh's louchest hacks, Clarke was politely but firmly refused admission — whereupon he fished a £50 note from his fake croc-skin wallet, asked if the bouncer had ever seen such a denomination before and issued a stern warning.

"If you don't f***in' let me in," growled the editor of Scotland's most distinguished quality daily, "this £50 note says I'll have this place closed down within a fortnight." Since the threat got him precisely nowhere, we assume the bet is still on.

DAVID Montgomery, moralistic *Mirror* chief executive, appears to be cash-strapped despite the zillions he has cashed in from his share options.

He has not yet paid £13,075.28 for work to the exterior of his former marital home in Warrington Crescent, Maida Vale, now occupied by recently divorced wife Heidi Kingstone. Solicitors have had to write sharp reminders to the tight-fisted millionaire.

LONDON *Evening Standard* film critic Alexander Walker, an Ulster Protestant, has been ranting that the new movie *Resurrection Man* is "pure IRA propaganda".

This will come as a surprise to anyone who watches *Resurrection Man*, which includes no IRA character whatsoever. It may also surprise the film's producer Andrew Eaton, who takes a dim view of the Provos — not least since they murdered his father.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

THE finest traditions of British journalism continue at Lord Rothermere's Aberdeen daily, the *Press and Journal*.

Following a weaselly Institute of Directors' report that claimed company directors work such long hours their rates of pay are no different to those at the bottom of the salary ladder, leader writer Norman Harper penned a highly sarcastic editorial, murmuring "Awwwwww" and concluding that "a 3 percent increase on £70,000 and a 3 percent increase on £12,000 are just a touch different."

When the page proof was seen by much hated editor Derek Tucker, who runs a bullying regime with thuggish managing director, ex-RUC cop Alan Scott, the final, printed editorial was somewhat different. Company directors, it lamented, "work long hours, suffer the loneliness and unseen stress of command and, in the final analysis are not substantially better off than their staff in terms of quality of life, pay increases or even the rate of pay her hour worked."

Before unhappy *Press and Journal* staff murmur "Awwwwww", they should read the last sentence. This, thundered the rag, is "a truth which commentators would do well to remember and digest".

HACKWATCH

SHOME MISHTAKES, SHURELY

***EYE* readers sometimes suggest that we should celebrate the good things in British journalism instead of merely highlighting the horrors. So here goes.**

Late last year the *Guardian* adopted an exciting new policy of correcting all mistakes and misprints, however trivial. Since then its daily column of "Corrections and Clarifications" has quickly become the most riveting read in any national newspaper. Just as some TV commercials are more watchable than the programmes in between them, so the *Grauniad*'s corrections are far, far more interesting than the original articles. As the paper's famous editor C.P. Scott nearly said: facts are sacred, but errors are divine.

5 December: "Page 18 of G2 yesterday carried the wrong dateline, saying Wednesday instead of Thursday."

9 December: "A letter, under the heading Churches' Big Day, page 14 yesterday, posed the question: 'Are those Christians prepared to invest their money ethnically…' We should have said 'ethically'."

10 December: "In an interview with Caroline Aherne in The Week, the second section of the Guardian, on 6 December, we said her former boyfriend, Matthew Bowers, died of stomach cancer. In fact he died from a rare cancer of the small intestine (neuroendocrine carcinoma)."

11 December: "In the quiz, Have You Been Paying Attention? on page 2 of The Week on 6 December, we mistakenly referred to the Girl Guide Association. Since 1990 the correct name has been the Guide Association. The phrase, Dib, dib, dib… which was mentioned was associated with the Scout movement and not the Guides."

13 December: "Correction to a correction on 11 December. The phrase, Dib, dib, dib… should have been spelt Dyb, dyb, dyb."

15 December: "In an article headed Composed or Unhinged, Friday Review, 21 November, it was said that Schumann's madness was caused by syphilis. We have been asked to point out that not all scholars are convinced that Schumann did indeed catch syphilis; and that even if he did, he displayed symptoms of severe mental instability long before syphilis may have exacerbated his problems."

17 December: "On a map on page 13, 12 December, the word Cornwall was written across Devon."

23 December: "A panel, headed Beef Facts, which accompanied a report on page 8 yesterday, was sexually confused. It referred to beef cows, instead of beef cattle. It described heifers as male calves, instead of female cattle which have not calved. It described steers as female calves, instead of castrated males, or bullocks."

24 December: "The actor Maurice Denham has asked us to point out that he was 88 yesterday, and not 87, as was reported in the Birthdays column on page 14."

1 January: "In yesterday's Pass Notes on Morse Code (page 3, G2), we gave the code for N as dida. It is dadi. Apologies to readers who were irritated by the appearance of the same Country Diary on consecutive days, 19 and 20 December."

5 January: "In G2 (page 16, 30 December), we incorrectly described the lemon as an alkaline fruit, instead of an acidic one. In a blurb for the Society section above the masthead on page 1, 31 December, we misleadingly suggested it contained 'hundreds of jobs'. It contained advertisements for far fewer."

8 January: "On the Analysis page, page 13, yesterday, we referred to Germany's Italian frontier. It does not have one."

12 January. "In an article headed Twistin' By the Pool, G2, 6 January, we misspelt the name of Jimmy Savile, and overlooked the internal capital E in EastEnders."

13 January: "In Guardian Sport, 9 January, we confused readers by tipping Comanche Court to win the Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown, on page 15, while telling them on page 12 of the same issue that the horse had been withdrawn, which was the case. The error was due to a lack of liaison."

15 January: "One of our leading articles (12 January, page 14) began, 'As blue tits dive into the hedge to build their nests…' Blue tits do not build nests in hedges. They prefer holes in tree trunks, amongst other locations."

16 January: "In the cover story of G2, 14 January, To Oldly Go… On and On, we departed from the convention of referring to peers in their own right by their titles, without their forenames. George Weidenfeld is Lord Weidenfeld, not Lord George Weidenfeld."

19 January: "On page 8, G2, 15 January, we printed the initials of the Cuban film institute, ICAIC, in the wrong order."

21 January: "There was a misprint on Ted Hughes's poem St Botolph's (page 3, G2 yesterday), in a line which should have read, *Those long, balletic, monkey-elegant fingers.* We said *monket.*"

23 January: "Several readers point out that a pocket cartoon on page 19, 21 January, showing two characters puzzling over the rewiring of a plug, was potentially confusing and dangerous to anyone unfamiliar with the correct procedure. Please, don't do it at home."

24 January: "A photograph accompanying a report headed Fight Grows for Gays in Video Case, page 5, yesterday, was wrongly captioned, transposing the two people shown in it. It should have read as follows: Allan Horsfall, left, a veteran gay activist in Bolton, and Terry Connell, convicted on one charge of gross indecency. Apologies to both."

26 January: "Pass Notes (Page 3, G2, 21 January) suggested that the Great Bustard which is preserved in a glass case in Trowbridge Museum, Wiltshire, was the only such specimen in the United Kingdom. There are four mounted Great Bustards in Ipswich Museum, two of which are believed to have been native Suffolk birds."

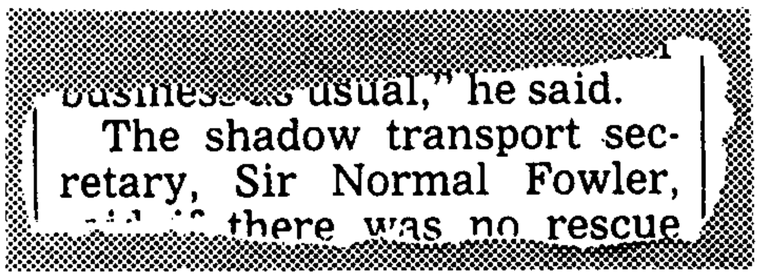
27 January: "An archive photograph (of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1978) used to illustrate an article on page 9, G2, 20 January, was printed the wrong way round, thus showing an orchestra apparently made up entirely of left-handed musicians. It was originally issued in that reverse order by Decca."

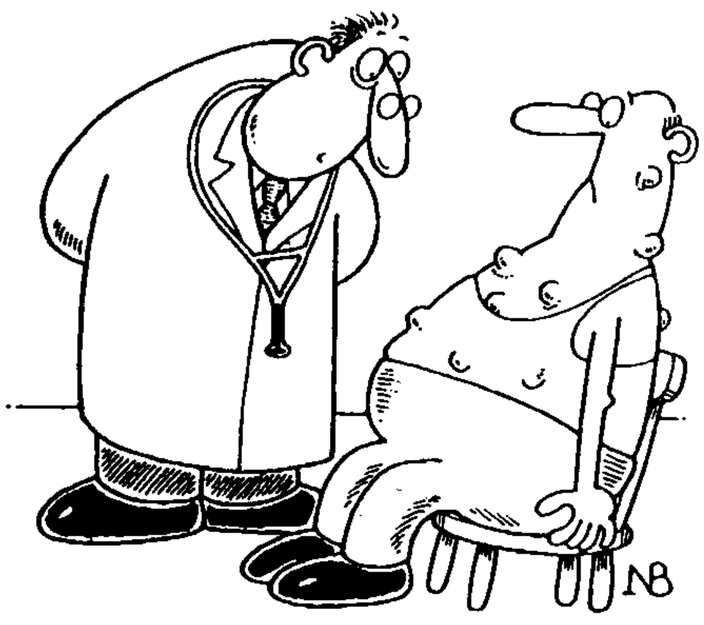
28 January. "An item headed Bad Day: Educashun, in a sidebar on the Policy and Politics page, page 11, yesterday, derived mild amusement from numerous spelling mistakes in a Labour Party jobs advertisement carried in the previous day's paper. All the errors were, in fact, made by the *Guardian*. None of them was in the original copy supplied by the Labour Party."

29 January: "The Great Bustard, Pass Notes, G2, 21 January, a further correction. There is no Great Bustard in Trowbridge Museum but there are four specimens in Salisbury Museum."

30 January: "In our front-page lead yesterday, we misspelt the name of the shadow transport secretary, Sir Norman Fowler. Apologies."

Uncharacteristically, the paper doesn't say what the mis-spelling was. But a glance at the previous day's front page reveals all:





"I'm afraid it's Chunky Chicken Flu"

IN THE TEAROOM

A WEEK of discreet and enigmatic references in the tearoom: hushed voices, knowing looks, forefingers tapping noses. Two words drift away from a knot of PPSs and hang in the air: "Salman Pak".

Not, it transpires, a new chairman for a race relations quango, nor a long-delayed meeting with Tony Blair for a *fatwa*-oppressed novelist. Salman Pak is an industrial plant in Iraq. A likely place, foreign office minister Doug Henderson has been assured, for Saddam to store "chemical weapons precursors", whatever they may be.

"New" Labour is getting used to the idea that it is going to be blooded. It may have been in office since last May, but an administration cannot ever feel it is really in *power* 'til it has bombed Johnny Foreigner. But who's to be the political point-man in this little excursion into the geopolitical bigtime?

Defence secretary George Robertson, perhaps; a man who craves the political limelight and berates his press office for the nugatory coverage they win him. Or foreign secretary Robin Cook, who's proved his mettle by sacking his wife at an airport terminal. And would blood on his hands ruin Mr Blair's electoral cred, or is it time the prime minister swallowed his inane grin and declared himself no-more Mr Nice-Guy? Fraught questions for the presentationally obsessed — and as yet unresolved.

But on a lighter note there's the Washington jolly. Not just ministers like Jack Straw, Helen Liddell and Alan Milburn, Blair is taking policy advisers David Miliband and Geoff Mulgan too. Instead of kicking up about spouses, the Tories should be asking who's paying for essentially political, as opposed to government, outings.

The pointyheads are being taken along to take part in a seminar on Friday designed to thrash out a new official ideology that "new" Labour can share with the "new" Democrats. It's more of the familiar codswallop about "non-statist collectivism" and "beyond Left & Right". Miliband, charged with coming up with a sexy new name for it, decided first on "The Third Way". Luckily a Downing Street policy nerd spotted, just in time, a web-site already called "The Third Way" run by... oops... ex-National Front activist Patrick Harrington (see *Eyes passim*) and dedicated to speaking out for "racial pride and solidarity". Puzzled White House staff have been asked to change the logo.

'Urquhart'

HEALTH minister Paul Boateng cuts an elegant dash in the Westminster gym pool in his black Dolce and Gabanna swimwear.

But is that a pager attached to his D&G's or is he just pleased to be there? On closer inspection it is indeed his Millbank Tower electronic manacle, umbilically wired so that the smoothie remains "on message" even as he breast strokes his way through the day.

THE late John Smith staked his future as Labour leader on the adoption by the party of one member, one vote (OMOV) — and was loudly supported by Messrs Blair, Brown, Blunkett and Prescott, the latter giving a tub-thumping conference speech in favour.

How odd that when the issue resurfaced at Labour's national executive committee last week and the comrades debated whether Euro candidates should be selected by one man, one vote or simply by, er, one man — ie Tony Blair — the same champions of democracy fell silent.

So embarrassed were they at the prospect of having to vote against "OMOV" to please their leader they all abandoned the meeting before the vote.

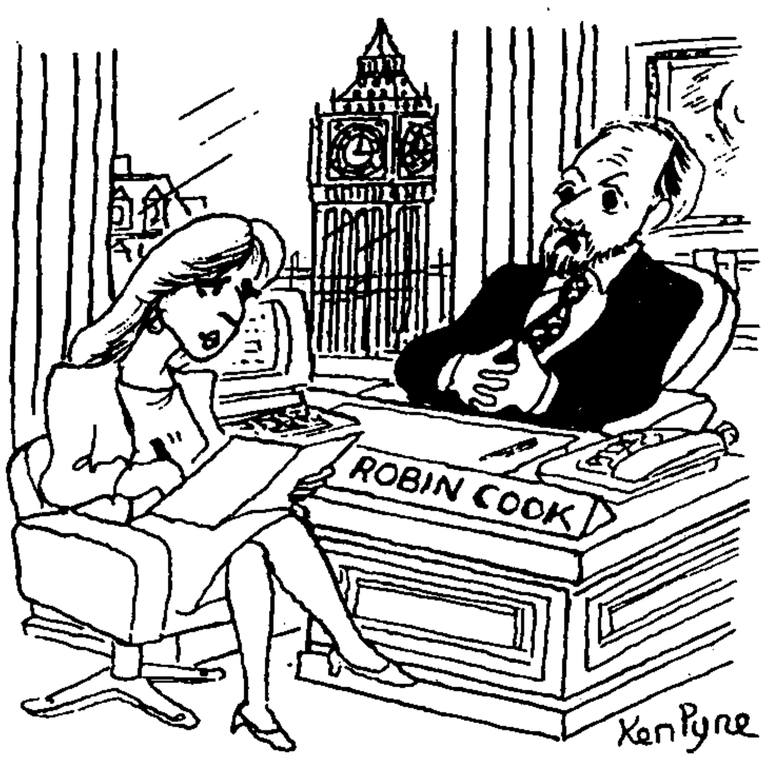
TONY BLAIR has ruled that ministers are free to take their wives, husbands, lovers and catamites on foreign trips: as far as he's concerned, they all count as "spouses". But the Inland Revenue may have other ideas.

"Where a spouse accompanies an employee on business trips," according to the Revenue's national audit group manual, "the employee is liable to tax on the cost."

The expense is allowable against tax only if the spouse has "some practical qualification which is used regularly during the trip", or if "the employee's health is so poor that it would be unreasonable to have to travel alone". But where the spouse's official duties are "relatively unimportant", or the main reason for accompanying the employee "is to avoid separation", the employee (or foreign secretary) is liable to tax.

Accountants with experience of these matters say it is extremely hard to get Revenue agreement to exemption. But is Gaynor Regan a spouse? The schedule E manual says that the rules extend to any member of "the employee's family or household", defined as "the employee's spouse, his children and their spouses, his parents, his dependants, his servants and his guests (that is people staying at his home or in accommodation provided by him)." Since Gaynor Regan shares Cook's official residence, she is technically living in accommodation provided by the government rather than her lover.

This old-fashioned definition means Cook may escape tax by having a paramour who isn't his wife, his guest or his dependant — when the same travel would be taxable if they were married. It will be interesting to see if Gordon Brown (whose loathing for Cook is well-known) decides to close this useful little "lovers' loophole" in his forthcoming budget.



"Take a Valentine card to yourself..."

WHEN the dear leader opted for a series of ticket-only roadshows to sell his vision of welfare reform, his only problem was how to pay for them.

Since Labour is stony broke, the party's assistant general-secretary Margaret McDonagh went to see the brothers in the engineering union, who agreed to stump up for the first Dudley extravaganza. Sadly, no other union wanted to oblige, so party hacks in Millbank decided to try the private sector: they invited a squawk of commercial lobbying firms to a party in the hope of securing bungs from some of their clients.

Hence seasoned Labourites were amazed to find themselves drinking cheap plonk alongside a brace of former Tory and Liberal Democrat election candidates who had since moved into lobbying. Among their number was the sterling Jeremy Sweeney, formerly of Ian Greer Associates, as well as other suits from companies as diverse as Biss Lancaster and the Policy Partnership.

On one issue the good and the great from the world of blue chip companies and high finance were agreed: not even the Tories would have been daft enough to pass the hat round in such a way. No doubt Blair's welfare roadshow will now be seeking sponsorship from assorted debt collectors, pawn brokers and loan sharks.

WHILE Tony Blair was talking about welfare reform in Dudley, so was Frank Field but to a rather unusual audience.

Field was giving the annual Sir Keith Joseph memorial lecture to the very rightwing Centre for Policy Studies. Nodding sagely as Field limbered up were the former Tory ministers Michael Portillo and William "Wally" Waldegrave.

And what did the Labour minister say? That he "treasured Sir Keith's memory" and that "the memories come flooding back of occasions where each of us would be laughing to such an extent with tears falling down our faces, that I would fear for Keith's life as he fought for breath". New Labour, New Conservatives.

PITY Lord Irvine, the lord chancellor. He is almost universally loathed by parliamentary colleagues suspicious of his Machiavellian nature and early patronage of the young barrister Tony Blair — and detractors don't stop at the Commons benches.

Political lobbying firms report that their companies have been sent several CVs from staff in the lord chancellor's office, all desperately seeking a different employer. It seems the cuddly cardinal might need to stop spin-doctoring and start recruiting...

DAVID WILSHIRE, Tory MP for Spelthorne, achieved maximum publicity for his questions about what he calls government sleaze.

On 26 January he asked searching questions about the cost of new furniture at 10 and 11 Downing Street. He also asked about "the cost of partners being taken overseas by ministers".

Can this be the same David Wilshire who went with his wife to the Gulf dictatorship of Bahrain last October? The visit was paid for by the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, which specialises in freebies and perks for MPs who behave in a friendly way to the Bahraini dictators. Mrs Wilshire was reported to be "delighted" with the gift of jewellery which she got from the emir there.

Meanwhile, as the jailing and torturing of dissidents in Bahrain plumbs new depths, the British parliament has made another mighty effort to establish good relations with the dictators. A cocktail party in the Commons on 27 January was well attended by various members of the Al Khalifa ruling family. Dr John Marek, Labour MP for Wrexham, gave the speech of welcome in which he praised the "historical relations linking Bahrain and Britain", and formally set up a new British-Bahraini parliamentary association. (the Bahraini parliament has been dissolved since 1975).

The Bahraini foreign minister, Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak al Khalifa, replied with a gracious speech in which he urged MPs "to visit Bahrain and personally witness the security and stability there". Dr Marek may well respond to this invitation. In October 1996, he visited Bahrain for four days at the expense of the Bahraini government.

Will visiting MPs see representatives of the large and growing Bahraini opposition? One answer to that question came in the House of Lords recently (28 January). Asked by Lord Avebury "if the foreign office official who went to Bahrain in November saw any members of the democratic opposition and if so whether the British embassy in Manama have regular contact with any of those persons", Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean replied in the best traditions of "new" Labour's ethical foreign policy.

"The visiting FCO official", she said, "did not meet representatives of the Bahraini opposition. Nor do the British embassy in Manama have contact with them".

"GORGEOUS" George Galloway, the Glasgow Labour MP, must have a short memory.

Interviewed on BBC's *Westminster Live* about Britain's policy towards Iraq, he said: "If we get any closer to Bill Clinton on this he'll be asking us up to his hotel room."

This rang bells with those who recalled Gorgeous's days as head of the charity War on Want. Then, the married George attended a conference in Greece with his mistress who, it was later discovered, shared his, er, hotel room.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

NEW Labour: New Architecture — and lots of lovely fees for the exciting designers chosen by the new architectural establishment, aka Lord Rogers.

Donald Dewar, secretary of state for Scotland, has certainly got the message and is tearing ahead with his exciting plans for an international competition for the new building for the new Scottish parliament in Edinburgh on the (old) brewery site he has chosen near (old) Holyrood Palace.

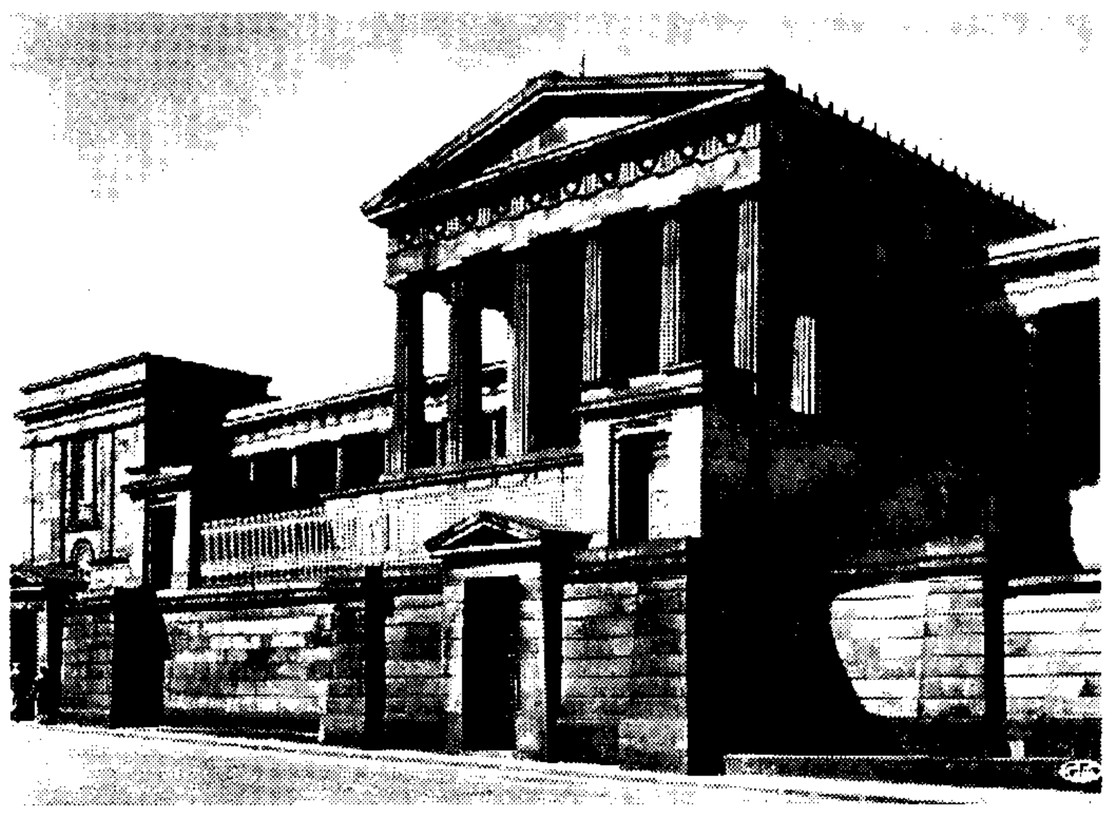
Oddly enough, Donald's plans are increasingly opposed by the people of Scotland he purports to represent. This is not only because it is dawning on them that the home for a Scottish parliament ought to be chosen by a democratically-elected Scottish parliament rather than by a single politician appointed by the government in London and advised by sinister civil servants. It is also that most people who have thought about the matter have concluded that the best possible home for the parliament is on Carlton Hill.

Carlton Hill is probably the finest site for a parliament in Europe, visible from all over the city. And on it sits a magnificent Greek Revival building, Thomas Hamilton's former Royal High School, which the great Greek Thomson of Glasgow considered to be one of the two "finest buildings in the Kingdom". And in the 1970s, at the time of the referendum, it was converted into a parliament: it has a debating chamber with seats (and microphones) and is all ready to go. It is small, of course, but just over the road is (old) St Andrew's House designed by Thomas Tait, the finest government building of the inter-war years, which is also ready and waiting to provide the necessary offices.

Now to anyone except Lord Rogers, Tony Blair, Stephen Bayley and Donald Dewar, the fact that the High School is an old building and is Classical is not a disadvantage but an asset. To the semi-educated and blinkered, a Doric column may seem authoritarian, but Thomas Jefferson, say, would have understood that it can represent democracy. The Greek Doric of the High School in fact symbolises everything that is, or was, noble and great about Scotland: the Enlightenment, education, civilisation.

But not to Donald Dewar, who would rather spend £40m or more of taxpayers' money on an exciting new building. So every possible red herring has been introduced, such as alternative sites at Leith and in the Haymarket. Feasibility studies were commissioned for all three sites, which soon demonstrated that these other two were unsatisfactory.

So then — suddenly, at a late stage — the Holyrood brewery site was introduced. And RMJM architects (Robert Matthew Johnson Marshall) — who had already been asked to do one of the three feasibility studies — were lucky enough to be asked to look at the new site as well and pronounced it hunky-dory. In fact the site is low, confined, inconspicuous and will cause traffic problems; but Dewar — advised as always by Dr John Gibbons, head of development at the Scottish office, who is awfully keen on new buildings — went for it.



But what is wrong with an old building; especially a magnificent, distinguished and superbly sited one like the High School *which has already been converted for parliamentary use?* After all, the Irish parliament still meets in a Victorian lecture hall while the English parliament (on the whole — dare one suggest? — rather a success historically) happily used an old royal chapel for centuries until it went on fire. But the High School is too small, we are told; besides, it might be awkward for the disabled.

But the real reason for this devious and undemocratic attempt to foist on Scotland a new building on a rotten site is that the High School on Carlton Hill is *too good* for the purpose: it would serve all too well as a symbol for the Scottish parliament, which the government may not really want to succeed. Dewar has been heard to say that the building is a "nationalist shibboleth" and to choose another site is "a poke in the eye for the Edinburgh establishment". On such serious grounds is a multi-million pound decision determined by "new" Labour.

MEANWHILE at the Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture things go from bad to worse. A new head of school, Adrian Gale, has been appointed and the press has been stunned to learn that he is an old "modernist".

So is HRH changing his tiny mind about architecture, seduced by the omnipotent glamour of My Lord Rogers? Well, no. Mrs Gale just happens to be a judge and is friendly with Lady Browne-Wilkinson, the new chairman of the institute's council, who is also a judge and the lawyer who handled Mrs Parker-Bowles' divorce. Oddly enough, three out of the five new council members (after the recent purge) are also lawyers. No architects, of course, but who cares about them? Things in fact are now run by Camilla's protégé Mark Boland (Eye 938).

And he has now succeeded in killing *Perspectives.* ***The recent announcement that the (now excellent) magazine would close was prematurely leaked by HRH's office: the staff were not told of course. But Brian has never much minded about blood on the floor as he pursues his ideal world.***

'Piloti'

MASONIC NEWS

THE forced retirement of Commander Michael Higham, Grand Secretary and Grand Scribe Ezra of the United Grand Lodge of England, follows his provocative claim to a Commons select committee last year that no freemasons were involved in the notorious Great Moat House Punch-up.

This bloody scuffle, involving policemen in dinner jackets at a masonic "boxing night", has already cost Lancashire police nearly half a million pounds. But Higham, as chief spokesman for the masons, doggedly backed the Lancashire freemasons who still insist, nine years after the event, that the dinner at the Blackburn Moat House Hotel was not "a boxing night" but "a ladies' evening".

His defence provoked MP Chris Mullin, now chairman of the Commons home affairs committee, into saying: "It has got freemasonry written all over it, in letters so large that anybody could see them."

Mullin's committee has now created problems for the lord chancellor, Lord Irvine, who is said to be trying to resist Labour government policy to force judges and crown prosecutors to reveal secret masonic memberships.

The select committee and a crown court jury have concluded that in April 1988 two furniture traders, Sidney and Shaun Callis, 52 and 25, were beaten up by policemen wearing dinner jackets who were freemasons. The businessmen, a father and son from Station Road, Elmsthorpe, Leicestershire, had been booked into the Moat House for a trade show as guests of their bedding suppliers, Silentnight PLC.

There was nothing silent about the long night that began when they wandered through an open door into the hotel's Buckingham suite and bought a round of drinks at the bar. Both men were badly injured when they were bundled out of the masonic party. They were then arrested and charged with assault.

When they returned to the Moat House the next morning, the father and son were "held to ransom" by an hotel manager who admitted he was a freemason. His receptionist demanded £500 in cash to pay for a damaged house plant and the damaged dinner jackets of freemasons, saying: "You cannot have your possessions — we know you have got money." He allegedly knew this because of a "masonic connection" with the local police, who had searched the Callises after their arrest and tipped off the hotel that they were "carrying readies".

In the hotel car park the father and son discovered their car had been ransacked, with all its wheel trims missing and its tyres flat. Their barrister said some hotel staff thought "it was a great joke" when the injured Shaun Callis had to unbolt all the car wheels and walk two miles in the rain to get the tyres inflated.

A jury at Lancaster crown court heard that police inspector Jack Gordon Pollock, traffic policeman Robert Irwin and former police sergeant Brian Pemberton had all helped get the two men out of the Buckingham suite. Inspector Pollock said he had left the Lancashire force eight days after the incident and had resigned as a freemason two months before the trial. When he refused to name his old lodge, the judge said he must reply to the question. He answered: "Perseverance Lodge" and revealed there were 50 lodges in Blackburn.

In its report on the affair, the Commons select committee noted that George Graham, a former crown prosecutor, East Lancashire coroner and "a well known local solicitor who, at the trial acted for some of those involved in the incident", was actually present at the masonic function when the fighting started. Mr Graham died recently.

Sidney and Shaun Callis were acquitted of all charges. A police internal investigation resulted in disciplinary charges against two officers, and seven years later the Lancashire police authority, the hotel and various individuals paid the Callises a total of £170,000 in an out of court settlement.

"Oh, and the ceasefire's still holding..."

EYE TV

Heat Of The Sun (ITV)
The Force (BBC2)

AT the very end of last year — unnoticed by a holidaying media — an extraordinary and unprecedented event in television history occurred: Carlton Television produced a good programme. The company's adaptation of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman In White* was, indeed, one of the best classic dramas for many years.

Strangely Carlton made this gem for the BBC and, one month later, it looks even more like an isolated and cathartic gesture of good faith: rather like a man breaking off from his exertions in a brothel to send flowers to his wife. For, with its first 1998 drama for ITV, Carlton has come up with a real stinker.

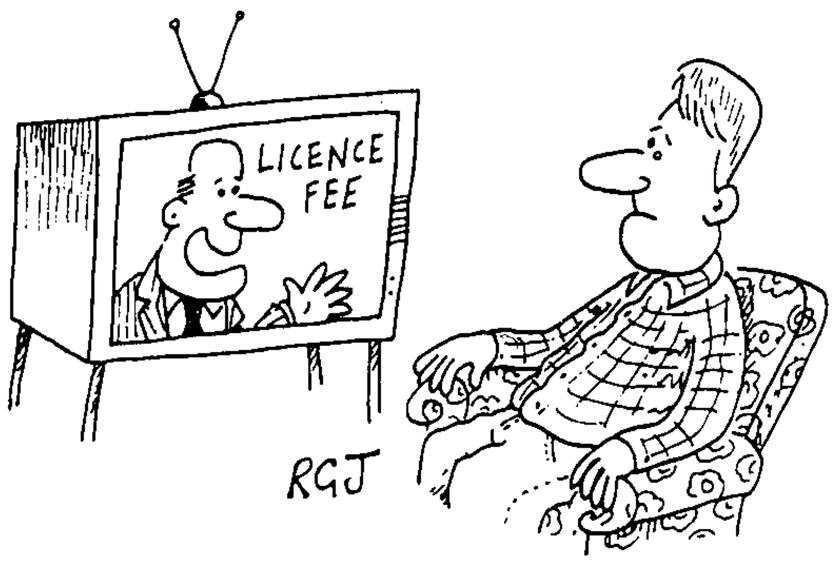
You can roughly imagine how **Heat of the Sun** happened. Network centre wanted yet another detective. Every set of sleuth novels ever written has now been produced or optioned by some company or other. So ITV got Russell Lewis — creator of the simultaneous BBC1 bummer *The Ambassador* — to invent one of his own.

Setting? Glumly contemplating an atlas of Britain, Lewis realised that all the major cities and most idyllic rural communities had been taken. Abroad, then. What about Africa? Lots of wildlife backgrounds: "I'm thinking *Inspector Morse* meets David Attenborough." Kenya came through with a good access deal.

Now a detective? Sadly examining popular psychology primers, Lewis realised that every possible character type and eccentricity had already been used. The past, then. "1930s Kenya. I'm thinking *Morse* meets Attenborough on the set of *White Mischief*."

This solved at a stroke the characterisation problem. In a 1990s setting the central character — Supt Tyburn, played by Trevor Eve — would be deeply boring: he is a politically correct prig who is anti-racist, anti-sexist and has been exiled from England for his exposure of child abuse in high places.

But, placed in the 1930s, Tyburn becomes impossibly exotic. How is it that he comes to have these attitudes decades before they existed? For the first hour the viewer assumes there is a time-travel solution — as in *Back To The Future* or *Goodnight, Sweetheart*. Eve's character has somehow reached 1930s Kenya from our present. Of course, Carlton's name on the credits should have warned us that it's nothing of the sort. It's simply bad television.



"... and because of the unique way the BBC is funded, all tonight's programmes will be complete rubbish"

At least Tyburn's modernity is accidentally funny. His quiet heroism and astonishing powers of deduction are merely boringly standard telly-detective characteristics. In the past, the PR job for the police performed by fictional detectives has been usefully challenged by documentary television. The fly-in-the-cell tradition begun by Roger Graef's series about the Thames Valley police left images which competed in viewers' mind with the Morses, Dalgleishes and others.

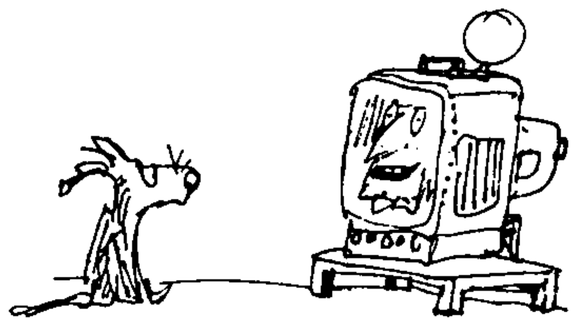
Not, it seems, any longer. BBC2's latest copper-doc **The Force** shows how much the police have learned about screen-smoothness and the control of access. It's now clear that Graef benefited from the arrogance and naivety of police in the seventies. Indeed, revealingly, this series is not even an observational doc, but is conventionally reported by Knacker-specialist hack David Rose.

The overall message of the series is that — after having one or two problems — the lads have got things sorted out. Yet, just before the series started, at least two senior police officers in forces not featured in these programmes faced serious disciplinary charges. Perhaps Thames Valley *is* different.

Most revealing was *The Force*'s bizarre relationship with fictional coppers. The episode on detectives featured an Oxford cop who drove a red sports car and liked opera. Publicity and script relentlessly sold him as "the real Inspector Morse" with the programme largely consisting of a checklist of his points of comparison and contrast with Colin Dexter's invention.

The influence of telly cops on real ones is a good subject for a doc — many of the police excesses in the seventies were attributable to *Sweeney*-imitation — but *The Force* simply used the connection as a fun structure. It's a sad truth that, as you get older, factual cops start to look more and more fictional and fictional ones increasingly silly.

'Square Eyes'



MEDIA NEWS

JOHN BIRT's annual drinks for "serious" media correspondents was held in TV Centre's most luxurious venue — the director-general's own office.

While broadsheet hacks and media editors sucked up to him, a TV set blathered away in the corner showing the almost unwatchable News 24. As the hacks remarked, this must have doubled the cable channel's viewing figures.

Halfway through the knees-up, however, Birt had to leave on vital BBC business. The now tired and emotional hacks then egged on the *Independent*'s media editor, Rob Brown, who crept behind the great man's desk and scribbled on his memo pad: "Privatise the BBC!"

IS Chris Evans, the world's greatest broadcaster, spreading himself too thin?

As *Broadcast* has noted, *The Simpsons* on BBC2 "has one of TV's easier jobs — trouncing Chris Evans. Recently it outpointed C4's *TFI Friday* by 3.4 million viewers to 2.0 million, the season's widest margin".

While there is an even bigger chasm between Evans and BBC1 and ITV, over the water the man who recently bought most of Virgin Radio is also finding the radiowaves trying.

Last September his consultancy Ginger Productions picked up the contract to programme Dublin's ailing Radio Ireland (a 1 percent audience rating), with Evans being promised equity if he could rescue the station, now renamed Today FM. Last month saw a relaunch — and apart from some tasteless but funny breakfast show Gerry Adams impressions, the new format has little going for it.

One survivor from the old regime, Man United and Millwall footballer turned pundit Eamon Dunphy, has been raising the station's profile, however. Having escaped Ginger's mass redundancies he kicked off one week with a daytime discussion on penis enlargement. Off air, when asked by a newspaper hack whether, hypothetically, Dunphy would accept cocaine if it was offered to him, he replied: "Fucking yes. I take it if I am offered. I would be a regular user of marijuana, but I am not a regular user of coke. You can't get good coke in this town."

He then bemoaned the limited availability of crack in Dublin city centre. After predictable outrage Dunphy apologised, but regulators monitoring the station are unlikely to have been impressed.

IF there is a better website than the BBC's on the internet, I have yet to find it. It is informative, imaginative and beautifully designed — and already Europe's largest.

— John Birt, director-general of the BBC, reported in Ariel, *house mag of the BBC*

prostitute
I KNOW IT'S DEGRADING...
SORDID...
AND THAT I'VE REACHED THE BOTTOM...
BUT ALL I CAN SAY IS...
I DID IT FOR THE MONEY!
£ £ £ TO BE INTERVIEWED BY ESTHER
SIGNED LUCY LOSI
Ken Pyne

WHEN TV presenter Anthea Turner left her husband Peter Powell, the newspapers revealed her new love was Grant Bovey, a "millionaire video and film executive".

He is in fact managing director of Watershed Pictures Limited, but descriptions of his wealth and pictures of his enormous Edwardian house in Sussex were somewhat galling for some of those who have done business with Bovey in the past.

Taylor, Gotham and Fry, insolvency practitioners, recently wrote to Watershed's creditors telling them that payments under their voluntary arrangement would be continuing. This letter reveals that unsecured creditors of Watershed are owed £1,151,922, while preferential creditors like the department for employment and the taxman are still owed £130,916.

Anthea's boyfriend has also been revealed to be in a battle with the Football Association over rights to sell on the FA's archive footage of the FA cup and England Internationals. The FA wants to sell the rights itself and says Bovey's ownership of them expired last year. Bovey claims his control lasts until 2002.

Whoever wins, the 66 creditors hope that "millionaire" Bovey shares some of his wealth with them.

A "NEW BBC comic masterpiece" has been heralded by the *Mail on Sunday*, which devoted two *MoS* pages to a feature on *How do You Want Me?* a series starring "brilliant new comic actor" Dylan Moran with a "brilliant script" by Simon Nye.

This brilliance is brought to BBC2 by Kensington Films and its executive producer Roderick Gilchrist. What the paper forgets to mention is that Kensington Films is part-owned by Associated Newspapers, owners of the *Mail on Sunday*... whose deputy editor is one, er, Roderick Gilchrist.

CHARLES FURNEAUX, C4's deputy commissioning editor for documentaries, always insists his producers obtain unlimited "access" to their subjects. But he seems curiously reluctant to practise what he preaches.

As Hollywood director Michael Apted travels the country filming *Forty-Two Up*, the worthy sixth follow-up to the brilliant *Seven Up*, our Charles will be missing. Furneaux was first filmed as a precocious seven-year-old public schoolboy in 1962, among a group totally sure of their future careers. Other "Seven-Uppers", despite the various traumas of their lives, are still happy to face the Granada crew all these years later — but not Citizen Charlie. He cites "personal reasons" for his non-cooperation.

What would he say to an independent producer who used that as an excuse? Answers on a postcard, please, to *Cutting Edge*, Channel 4 Television, London SW1.

Diana balls

"As the mounds of flowers grew even higher and formed solid blocks upon the earth, it became possible to speak of floral architecture... in many ways, Diana's architecture was as much an architecture of cellophane as flowers. Often the multitude of transparent plastic wrappers became the dominant formal aesthetic, forming what appeared to be glass structures or blocks of ice in the summer rain."

— *Extract from Phillip Kent's essay* The Building of Death *in a new compilation,* Diana, Cultural Studies and Global Mourning

"Most striking of all was her ability to speak to and recruit into her orbit those groups who considered themselves marginalised from the more orthodox political processes... The taken for grantedness of the transracial, transcultural social encounters suggests a kind of POST anti-racism, and marks a significant — if uneven — British cultural transformation that was reflected in the composition of her mourners after her death."

— *Extract from Mica Nava's essay* Diana Princess of Others: The Politics and Romance of "Race", *ibid*

IF YOU'RE a fan of Roger Bolton on Channel Four's *Right to Reply*, watch out for references to *Channel Five News*.

The normally depressed makers of the show are still celebrating Roger's performance on Sunday 9 November when he described *Channel Five News* as an "undoubted success". Modesty prevented Roger from heralding the role in that success of *Channel Five News* producer Alex Bolton, son of Roger.

But then it's easy when discussing *Channel Five News* to forget to name the famous fathers of key members of staff — like Roland Buerk, son of Michael; Sarah Smith, daughter of the former leader of the Labour party; and Katie Snape, daughter of the Labour MP for West Bromwich East.

HACKS on tight newsgathering budgets are wondering just how much it cost to fly Peter Sissons to Washington to cover Trousergate for the *Nine O'Clock News* — especially when all he did was stand in front of a window with a view of the White House to interview the BBC's own Washington correspondents.

THE PERFUMES OF ARABY

THE 60th anniversary of the BBC's Arabic service at Bush House was marked by a pisspoor puff in the corporation rag *Ariel*, better known as *Pravda*. No surprises there. But why was the recent *Grauniad* article by Ian Black so coy about the darker side of the department?

"It is not an entirely happy ship," he conceded, in a token attempt at balance, "with several cases before industrial tribunals. Yet it was ever thus."

The current head of the service is Gamon McLellan, brought in from the tiny Turkish service when no one better could be found to replace Sam Younger, now managing director of Bush House. He promptly purged his three most senior deputies, and was thus left without anyone to alert him to an epidemic of scams and dodges — including phantom shifts, the unauthorised employment of assorted girlfriends, wives and cousins by programme editors, and the invention of a "Soho Shift" in which a presenter would log on at Bush House and then pop off to W1 for the rest of the day to do some income-enhancing voice-overs on Arabic movies and TV commercials, followed by the occasional bit of recuperative leg-over.

This might have gone unnoticed in the rest of Bush House had not McLellan brought the ceiling in on himself by reneging on a deal with the NUJ to find jobs for about 20 of the Arab hacks left unemployed after the Saudis forced the closure of the BBC's Arabic TV channel. He dealt with this over-staffing problem by the simple wheeze of making all the TV journalists sit a test so difficult that not even his own senior editors could pass it.

There followed, to no one's surprise, nearly 20 industrial tribunal cases. Most of the complainants were bought off for £5,000 each in return for a written promise that they wouldn't blab — a document which had to be signed not just by the hacks but also by wives and girlfriends. Others, however, rejected the offer and are pressing on with their lawsuits.

Then another litigant, Dr Yussef Awad, launched a separate racial discrimination case, backed up by virulent articles in the Arab press which revealed that some favoured "occasional contributors" to the Arabic service were pulling in £80,000 a year tax-free.

Compounding McLellan's embarrassment, he was denounced on the letters page of *Ariel* last week by a producer from his own department who complained about "the way non-Arab management treats the staff" and pointed out that no Arab has ever been head of the Arabic service in its 60-year history.

In reply McLellan admitted that he had "deferred" a promised outside investigation of racial discrimination in his department "on legal advice". "While I find the Arabic service a great place to work," he added lamely, "I'm well aware that not all my colleagues will agree."

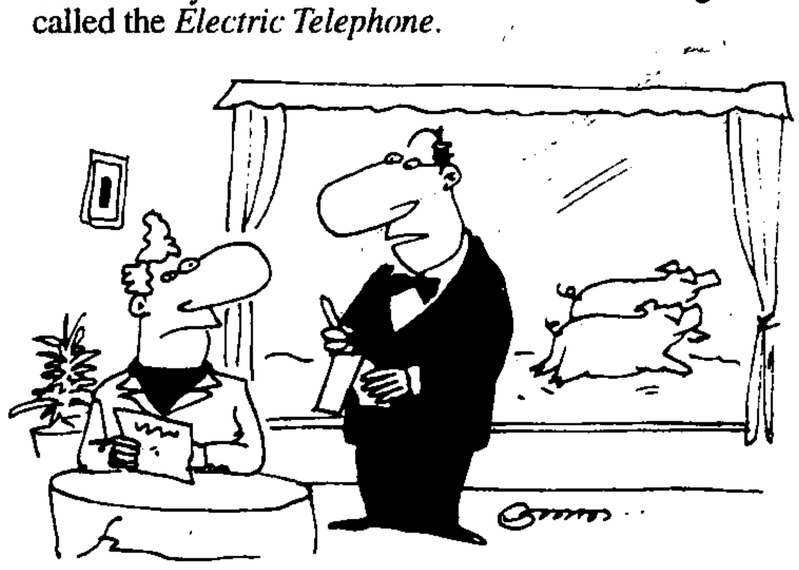
Why, then, is Bush House's most unpopular manager still in his job? Simple. The Beeb can't risk sacking him for fear that this would be interpreted by the industrial tribunal beaks and the Commission for Racial Equality as an admission of guilt.

PSEUD OF THE CENTURY

SIMPLY moving house isn't good enough for former Norman St John-Stevas, aka The Right Honourable Lord St John of Fawsley PC., D. Litt. As his very pompous change of address card reveals, Milord Precious has undergone... *A Translation.*

The momentous event took place on St Teresa of Avila's Day — 15 October last for secular morons — and saw Stevarse shifting pots and pans to Upper Harley Street near *The Regent's Park*, no less.

Happily the peer does make some concessions to 20th century life: he is contactable via something called the *Electric Telephone*.



"The bacon's off"

McNOBS

WITH Magnus Magnusson in the chair, the north-west board of Scottish National Heritage (SNH) awarded a grant of £129,000 to Lord Strathnaver, an absent board member, to *prevent* trees being cut down in Balblair woods, a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) on his Sutherland estate.

Oddly, it now emerges that the estate wants to fell and clear 8.9 hectares in, er, Balblair woods.

Mr Angus Graham, vice-convenor of the Western Isles council and a former SNH member, spoke out against the grant when it was awarded and insists Strathnaver's estate should neither cut down the Scots pines in Balblair woods nor gain financially if or when the wood is sold. A spokesman for the SNH says the estate "will not gain a penny. Any profit from the timber was taken into account within the £129,000 compensation figure". So that's all right, then.

Meanwhile in Perth & Kinross there is concern over the billeting arrangements of 79-year-old Captain James Rattray, who some years ago sold his magnificent home, Craighall Castle, near Blairgowrie, to his son Lachlan to "avoid death duties". The captain, who is chief of the Rattray clan (motto: My Wishes Are Above The Stars), then moved in to a "freezing" cottage in the grounds, so obliging his local council to come to the rescue and offer him a coveted sheltered-housing flat — to the dismay of Labour MP John McAllion and those on the housing waiting list.

The left-wing MP wants an investigation into "how Captain Rattray was given this flat", and he may have a point: the captain's son is now able to charge guests £55 a night for a bed at the castle his dad sold him.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"An ashen-looking Cher cancelled engagements in London yesterday to fly home to Los Angeles for her former husband's funeral. She was, a spokeswoman said, deeply distressed by news of the tragedy, having remained friends with Mr Bono since their divorce in 1974."

— The Times, *Wednesday 7 January 1998, p12.*

"Yet in 1974 Cher filed for divorce on grounds of her 'involuntary servitude'. It was a bitter separation: almost 20 years later the rancour was still evident when Cher, who survives him, said of her former husband's election to Congress: 'Sonny is perfectly at home there. Politicians are one step below used car salesmen'."

— The Times, *Wednesday 7 January 1998, p19.*

DOING THE ROUNDS

Down on Chase Farm

WHAT has happened since overworked junior doctors struck their historic deal on working hours with Virginia Bottomley and the British Medical Association? Er, they are still working dangerously long hours — only now some of them are doing so for a substantial loss of income.

Junior doctors working intensive shifts in demanding jobs where they get no rest at all are not now allowed to work more than 56 hours a week. Those on less demanding shifts or rotas can be on duty for up to 72 hours a week, provided they do no more than 56 hours of actual work. This new "law" should have been implemented by December 1996. But the BMA's junior doctor committee annual report for 1997 found that a quarter of all doctors are still working more than their target hours.

In 1998 the pressure on trusts to be seen to be meeting the target is such that many are simply refusing to acknowledge how intensely their junior doctors are still working, and forcing them to do at least 72 hours of duty which includes, um, 72 hours' actual work. To add insult to injury, a refusal to acknowledge the work intensity means a refusal to pay the appropriate overtime. Hence the loss of income.

A prime abuser of junior staff is the medical directorate of Enfield's Chase Farm Hospitals NHS trust. The junior doctors work on an old fashioned 1 in 4 rota system, with most clocking up between 73 and 80 hours on duty. Under the "new deal" this working pattern is only deemed suitable in jobs where six hours of uninterrupted sleep is the rule when on call. Alas so many people need attention (at least 20 medical emergencies a day, plus half a dozen geriatric emergencies from a closed community trust) that the house officers and senior house officers rarely get to bed at all, and registrars are bleeped at least hourly throughout the night to sort out complicated problems.

The juniors should be working on a shift system, but with only four doctors at each grade there isn't the manpower to do so. The junior doctors' regional task force spotted the problem and insisted that the juniors be compensated by paying them for overtime at 70 percent of their daytime rate. This compares with the even more derisory 50 percent a normal rota attracts for overtime. But in August 1997, the trust decided to reduce the overtime to 50 percent without even negotiating with the juniors. This has resulted in a pay cut of 15 percent (or £300 a month for an SHO), rock bottom morale and junior doctors desperate to leave.

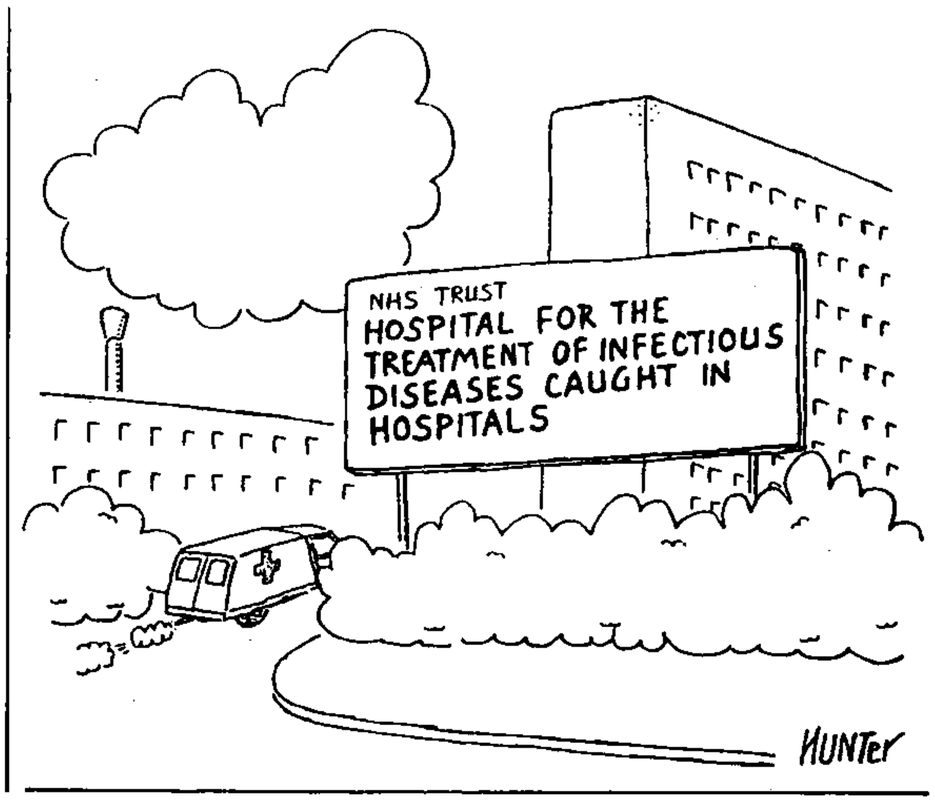
But not without a fight. The BMA has backed their claim to have their pay level reinstated, and four detailed breakdowns of their work patterns have been sent to the trust business manager and head of medical staffing. However, they have refused to come to a meeting and used the time-honoured tactic of stone-walling for six months until most of the doctors change jobs.

In its defence, the trust has employed three nurse practitioners (two part-time) to take a modicum of strain off the house-officers, and an extra consultant has been appointed but doesn't do any hands-on doctoring. Indeed, many of the medical consultants don't do post-emergency ward rounds at weekends either, leaving knackered juniors to sort out all emergencies. The consultants also refuse to back the juniors' pay claims, junior doctors claim, since the reduced pay level gives the superficial impression that work intensity has reduced in accordance with the new deal. Any financial recognition of the stress the doctors work under could lead to the posts becoming unrecognised for training and impossible to fill. The juniors themselves are so pissed off they've resorted to the old nurses' trick of arranging an "unofficial sick leave" rota, where they take it in turns to have time off sick and force the hospital to employ locums.

Any junior doctor considering doing a medical job at Chase Farm should clearly think again. But what effect is it having on patients? As one junior doctor put it: "Often it takes four hours or so for emergency admissions to be seen. Mistakes are made and there is a strong feeling that some deaths might have resulted, although this is obviously very difficult to prove."

Another added: "I think anyone admitted to hospital as a medical emergency has a right to be seen by a consultant before discharge, and this clearly isn't happening. In fact on one Friday, the house officer, SHO and registrar were all locums and they all buggered off at 9am on Saturday morning, so there was no post-emergency ward round at all. It's a disgrace and I can't wait to get out of it."

M.D.



DOWN ON THE FARM

LOBBYING is not what it was. Back in the good old days of Magna Carta, the barons, as members of the Country Landowners' Association were then known, could get what they wanted by poking something sharp up the king's jerkin.

Nowadays it all has to be so much more subtle. Arrogant bloody mindedness is out. Dialogue is in. Here is the CLA's five-point plan for refusing any new public access — but all in a spirit of cooperation.

1. Agree. "The CLA shares the Government's aim of providing greater freedom for people to explore the countryside." Whispers of "*Do* we Henry?"

2. Be helpful. "These aims can best be secured by a *voluntary* approach." Murmurs of "voluntary approach", and lots of nodding of heads.

3. Make it sound difficult. "Management is essential if access is to be environmentally, economically and sociably sustainable." Eh, what?

4. ...and expensive. "Resources are needed to cover the costs of providing and managing high quality public access." Muttering of "costs" and lots of shaking of heads.

5. Disagree. "The CLA considers that a 'right to roam' is unnecessary and would also be impractical and costly."

Of course. But then it is bound to be unnecessary if you are a landowner, and the CLA represents half of *all* land in the country. There is of course a "right to roam" on open land in most European countries, and no one finds it impractical or costly.

This modest increase in public access refers only to open land such as mountain, moor and common where access is already assumed by most people. But Tony Blair is defying his own party policy, his ministers and his backbenchers to strangle this popular and harmless measure.

'Gunboat'

"Hubbard, Old Mother. Caught her giving her poor doggy a bone!"

WATERWORLD

GOOD news for Northumbrian Water users: the company has a new non-executive director, one Laurie Caple, who has been chief executive of the Northumbria Ambulance Service NHS Trust for the last eight years.

A few years back the trust's money problems were not helped by frivolous spending. The purchase of personalised number plates for emergency vehicles was frowned upon, as was a trip to Florida by two senior staff *after* it had been agreed to buy six ambulances from a company there. Caple was so busy back then he forgot to get the accounts checked by an independent auditor. So, he's just the man for the water job.

Meanwhile gaffe-prone Yorkshire Water believes it has solved its terrible PR problems: Margaret Stewart, director of corporate affairs, is stepping down from her troubleshooting role on the board of the company's Water Services subsidiary and resuming normal duties.

Steward was drafted on to the subsidiary board two years ago at the height of public ridicule of Yorkshire's performance during the drought. Her task was to bang heads and improve communications, and the company says she has done a good.

Er, her minions still have a thing or two to learn about PR, however. The hugely profitable firm has just asked the Environment Agency to relax pollution levels on the River Aire in Bradford. This is because, it admits, its sewage treatment works is incapable of removing pesticides and other chemicals from water pumped into the river — despite promising to do so only last year.

ART NEWS

TIMOTHY "Tim O'Shanter" Clifford, flamboyant director of the National Galleries of Scotland, has helpfully "corrected" our story in the last *Eye* (see Letters page). He claims that the "existing post" of deputy keeper at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was filled "after interview by a panel" to a candidate "eminently well qualified for the job".

Oh yeah? The post of deputy keeper did not "exist". It was not advertised; nor was anyone interviewed for the job. The panel he mentions was considering candidates for keepership, and duly appointed the leading authority on Scottish portraiture, James Holloway. It was only after the meeting that Tim O'Shanter had the bright idea of installing one of the unsuccessful applicants — who had no discernible knowledge of Scottish art — as "deputy keeper", in clear breach of all civil service procedures.

After complaints from staff, an internal inquiry was set up under Professor Alan Tait, deputy chairman of the National Galleries' trustees. Since the report was kept secret, however, Clifford apparently thinks he can still maintain that he did nothing wrong.

Not so. The report by his own trustees concluded that Clifford's conduct "has been less than is to be expected of a senior administrative officer and this has both saddened and disappointed the board of trustees... We undertake that such circumstances will not be repeated and steps will be taken to ensure that this is the case."

Rotten Boroughs

Doncaster

HEADS will roll at Doncaster council where district auditor Bill Butler has criticised councillors who went on free trips to nearby places like Kuala Lumpa and Tokyo armed with council credit cards.

Former leader Peter Welsh was a regular on the jaunts, extending one housing meeting in Tokyo from four days to 11 to include very important "further meetings". Welsh also visited Singapore with an officer for a three-day housing conference (cost: £9,029). And three members and an officer travelled club class to Wilmington in the US at a cost of £9,608 — three times the economy fare.

Butler's other concern is the relationship between the council and property company Keepmoat Holdings. Together they had a joint venture, Doncaster 2000, to regenerate the town. The council sold land to Keepmoat with no rival bidders, and as early as July 1994 council legal director Judy Rolston had uncovered potential problems and doubted the council was getting good value. Her concerns were ignored.

Butler details hospitality offered by Keepmoat to councillors and officers. It ran trips to Euro 96 and Test matches, and held prize draws. One retiring Doncaster 2000 board member was given £1,000 in travel vouchers. Keepmoat has now popped up in Kingston upon Hull where it has struck a controversial land deal with the council — a deal already being examined by the district auditor.

Hackney

HACKNEY's long-awaited race report by black barrister Lincoln Crawford accuses the council of inflicting "psychological damage to ethnic minority employees through intimidation, bullying, lack of support and training" over the last 10 years.

Once again the taxpayer will pay, as was recently the case when accountant David Chan won £170,000 at an industrial tribunal after his boss repeatedly bullied him and called him a "Chink".

But the report hasn't identified one of the main reasons the authority got itself into such a mess over race in the first place. It was because thousands of jobs were given not just to black people, per se, or to black immigrants from the same African country (Nigeria), but to members of the same Nigerian tribe, the Hausa.

This led to the spectacle of departmental managers who held lowly positions within the tribe having to genuflect to council toilet cleaners (who held senior tribal positions) if they spotted them in the corridor.

Brighton & Hove

WHEN Brighton and Hove council met to discuss pedestrianisation of George Street, a traffic-blighted collection of suburban shops, they were greeted by baying shopkeepers — not least those from the Body Shop, where not everyone shares owner Anita Roddick's enthusiasm for the environment.

The protesting shopworkers were led by Suzi Wyner, franchisee of the Body Shop, who had closed her shop for two hours so staff could join the fun. Wyner and the other traders were noisily defending their right to have the 200-yard street permanently lined with illegally parked cars and jammed for much of the day with nose-to-tail traffic.

She later appeared on the front of a local newspaper with her mob of protesters against pedestrianisation, one of whom waved a banner bizarrely proclaiming "No to Disabled Drivers". This will surely provoke censure from la Roddick...

Scotch Corner

GLASGOW city council leader and "new" Labour disciple Frank McAveety said he'd gone head-to-head with the government to win more money for his city, which is millions in debt. The 33-year-old former teacher claimed "our government had been most supportive". What did he get?

In the city with the highest jobless figures and poverty levels in Scotland, a further 800 council employees are to be made redundant (4,300 jobs lost since 1996); £25 will be charged for disabled parking badges; £10 will be levied on replacement white sticks for the blind; and all residential child care units, and five public halls, will close.

The council is implementing £32m cuts and promising that council tax (increased by more than 50 percent since 1996) should rise by "no more than 10 percent". New Labour, New Support.

● EXPENSES for Highland's 72 councillors exceeded £1.4m and were 24 percent over budget last year.

Oddly, there is no system to monitor them, and officers were astonished to find no inventory of fax machines, mobile phones or other town hall equipment in the councillors' possession. Nor do the councillors submit itemised phone bills when claiming reimbursement.

The chaos only came to light when a councillor submitted an invoice for three overnight stays in Inverness (where the town hall is based) and 256 miles travel allowance for attending a committee of which he is not a member.

● DUMFRIES & Galloway council convenor Allan Baldwick took immediate action when he found a discrepancy in the £20,000 annual allowances (plus expenses for meals and accommodation and the use of a car) raked up by an Independent member of his authority. He suspended the member in question — er, none other than himself — left his official green Rover in the council car park and was driven home by an official where he now awaits the result of an inquiry into his alleged wrongdoing.

Lambeth

AN audit in Lambeth's environmental services department has found a financial hole some five or six million pounds deep. The exact figure can't be worked out until all the wastage has been calculated.

A major drain has been the hiring of outside contractors who do maintenance work and then submit outlandishly excessive invoices. For example, the bill for replacing a couple street lamp bulbs came to £5,000, and the money was duly paid out. Soon after, the same lamps were wrecked and had to be replaced all over again. Another £5,000 bill was submitted and paid all over again.

As punishment for not controlling its finances the entire department is being abolished. Paul Duffield, its director, is not being abolished, however. He is being kept on as consultant to chief executive Heather Rabbatts until he works out a nice little retirement package.

"It was this or buy a mobile phone"

Pseuds Corner

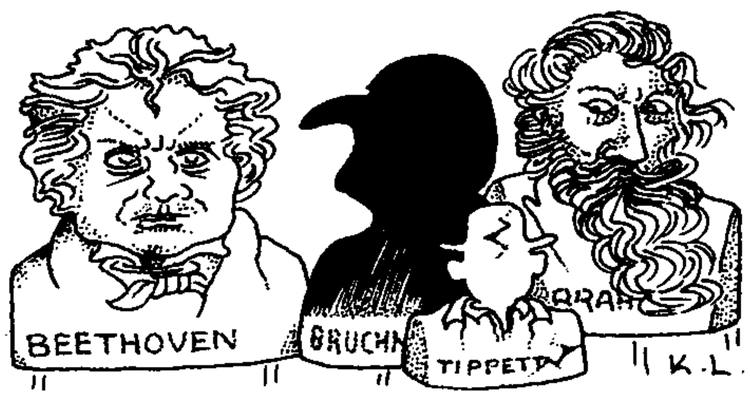
"The first dive was a nightmare. We didn't see the ship until we were fifteen feet from it," Cameron adds. "Initially, I had totally superimposed my vision on to the ship and made the mistake of not letting Titanic talk to me. I was like the astronauts who experienced the moon as a series of checklists and mission protocols. So, at a certain point I abandoned 'the plan' and allowed the emotional part of my mind to engage with the ship. It made all the difference in the world."

JAMES CAMERON
James Cameron's Titanic

In connection with the arc of Underworld, the notion of "working back" seems altogether too straightforward. The fragmented narrative — for once, the much abused term "deconstruction" seems apt — could even be seen as a reflection of the book's interest (via the nuclear bomb) in the consequences of quantum physics and the Theory of Relativity, in which space collapses and time loses its linearity. So maybe this is the first novel since Virginia Woolf's The Waves and Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet to conceive of itself — of its own formal essence — as the product of the world after Einstein, and the first to justify such a claim since Ulysses. And perhaps, I suggested, that may be what the book is really about.

"Yes, it is," DeLillo said.

RICHARD WILLIAMS
Guardian Weekend Section



"Michael [Tippett] was an innovator... and he was someone who I think really took on Beethoven — I don't mean by that that he tried to emulate Beethoven in a Germanic way, but he knew the size of the idea."

SIR HARRISON BIRTWISTLE
BBC News

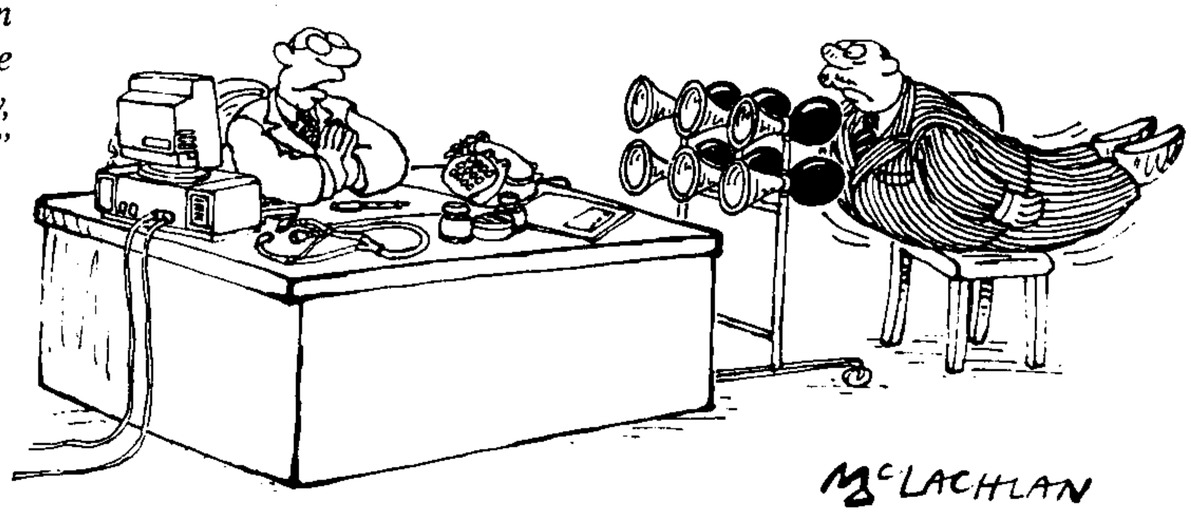
He [Nicholas Coleridge] recently bought an £8,000 marble-topped table. "I saw it and liked it but hummed and hawed for about a month. The shop said they'd keep it for me. Then I went in and they said they had two other people interested, so could I please make up my mind? They showed the other two people's business cards. One was Ralph Lauren. The other was Jacob Rothschild. So of course I bought the table immediately."

Independent

CONTRIBUTORS: David Challinor, Sean Blanchard, Anon, Anon.

£10 paid for entries

"I think we can take you off the all-fish diet now, Mr Isbister"



Letters

Even Stephen

Sir,

Thank you for drawing readers' attention to the discrepancy in my views, as expressed in THE GUARDIAN *in 1995 and the* DAILY MAIL *in 1997.*

The truth is, that I have renounced all my trendy, Lefty ways and now acknowledge that Paul Dacre is the greatest editor of the greatest newspaper the world has ever seen, and that the DAILY MAIL *is totally right in everything it says about everything.*

Yours sincerely,
JACI STEPHEN.

PS: Apologies for the brevity of this letter, but I have to go to Kensington to see St Paul to see if the DAILY MAIL *is renewing my contract.*

UnPoplar

Sir,

Your item about me (In The Tearoom, 23 January) is a bad joke and you owe me an apology.

Someone's imagination has run riot, as there has never been an exchange of letters between Harriot Harman and me; nor have I written to any other minister asking for a job.

Although I am a single mother my son is in his thirties and I am not on income support so I won't be seeking the benefits of the social security secretary's welfare to work initiative.

Yours,
MILDRED GORDON
(Former MP for Bow & Poplar)

London NW2.

No goat area

Sir,

I enjoyed Even Newer Muckspreader's piece about goats (942). My wife is a goat breeder and attained breed champion status with one of her Golden Guernsey's last year.

Actually goats do get scrapie; some herds are registered as scrapie free. It is, however, very rare.

There is another side to the stupid regulations relating to goats which I recount in my Internet site of Eurofollies, as follows:

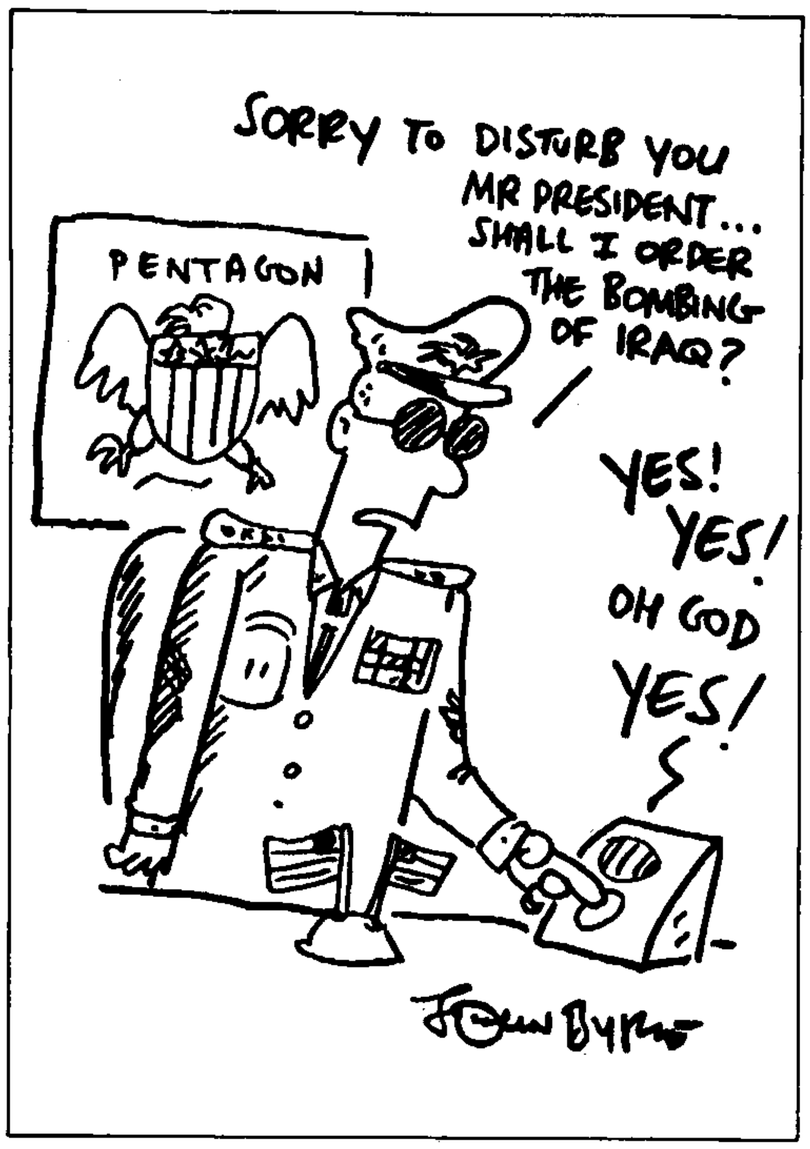
Smallholders selling goats milk have been hounded out of existence by new EU regulations (the EU Dairy Products Hygiene Regulations 1994).

We used to sell goats milk but can do so no longer. Some of our customers were very distressed when we stopped. Those with cow's milk allergies and MS sufferers were very hard hit. Now they have to buy from supermarkets, when they can get it, at much higher prices.

If you have access to the Internet look at my Eurofollies and Euromyths site at: www.kc3.co.uk/profile/eurofollie

Yours sincerely,
DAVID DELANEY,

Leominster, Herefordshire.



Value judgement

Sir,

In reply to Ian Davis' letter in EYE *942 about the CA Internet service, value for money cannot be determined by the statement "buys unlimited use of the Internet plus access to all other Which publications"? The last time I looked at an Internet magazine they rated value for money on a whole host of other factors such as speed of links, ratio of users to modems, number of support staff, percentage of uptime, etc. Perhaps Mr Davis's analytical powers could be best employed in reviewing credit cards for the CA?*

Kind regards,
IAN TOMEY.

Via e-mail.

Personal service

Sir,

Ian Davis asks "if you can recommend a better value I will gladly investigate it". Isn't it about time the UK Consumer Association did an objective report on Internet Service Providers?

The cost of UK CA and ISP compares unfavourably with those in other EU countries. The UK Consumer Association should be campaigning for lower charges for ISP. They can hardly do this in their present situation.

WHICH? *recently produced a report about car manufacturers charging more in UK than in other EU countries, how about the same for Internet Service Providers?*

MARTIN PATERSON,

Via e-mail.

Missing link

Sir,

Ashley Holmes (Letters, 942) says: "We have always been completely open about our links with NTL Internet (in press releases and in pages on our website) since Which? Online was launched."

Unless I'm missing something, two issues spring to mind:

- *"In press releases." Not in* WHICH? *then?*
- *"On our Website." Someone looking for an Internet provider is surely unlikely to have access to a Website?*

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CAMPBELL-JONES,

Via e-mail.

Lock, stock & bollocks

Sir,

Re: Wicked Which? (26 Dec). I pointed out that WHICH? *tested two identical locks (but branded under two different brands) and pronounced one to be more secure than the other. I was accused of being biased and was told that* WHICH? *are experts on everything.*

Cheers,
TOM GORDON,

Eric's Knob & Lock Shop, Exmouth, Devon.

Lookalikes

Monica

Barbie

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the close resemblance of new "Barrister" Barbie to her sister in arms and all American legal eagle, Clinton aide, Monica Lewinsky (24)? The fresh "I can't believe it's not butter wouldn't melt in my mouth" look is most inspiring.

Sincerely,
L. WHITE,

London E3.

Medal sum

Sir,

Your piece in the ART NEWS *(23 January) really does need correcting.*

For the record, I did not sell my collection of Renaissance medals "secretly"; I consulted my board, and was told to offer them ***anonymously*** *(a big difference) to ensure that knowledge of the owner did not influence the prices realised.*

With regard to the recent appointment of a senior member of staff, I cannot, of course, enter into discussion of the confidential details of the selection of a person to fill the (existing) post of Deputy ***Keeper*** *(not the appointment of a Deputy Director, a post which does not in any case exist). This post was offered, after interview by a panel, to a candidate I had never knowingly met before, and a person who, above all, is eminently well-qualified for the job.*

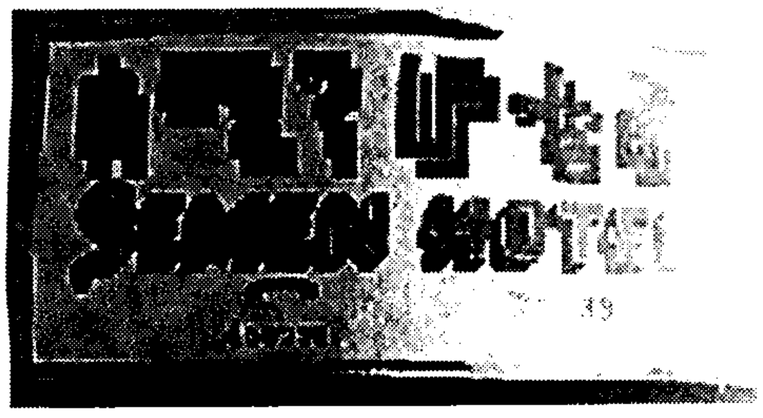
All your article succeeded in achieving was injury to the reputation of an innocent, highly-regarded museum professional, in her very first month in post.

Yours sincerely,
TIMOTHY CLIFFORD,

National Galleries of Scotland.

HUSBAND
What the bleedin' hell's wrong with him?
He's one of those mime artists. He doesn't speak
No, no, don't hit me!
He bleedin' does, the cheat
TA
TA

I-SPY *Adigrat, Ethiopia*



Submitted by Jon Williams. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Up your Ally

Sir,

If only Derek Wyatt was correct about the size of the debt he and his Labour colleagues have run up over the Alexandra Palace fiasco. The debt is actually nearly 20 percent higher than he claims, now standing at £65m and rising.

Yours,
MARK PACK,

London N4.

East ender

Sir,

I must say that I have grown increasingly weary of the EYE*'s tiresome references to the Japanese and their conduct during the war.*

While I would never condone the actions of the Japanese army, I hardly think that the conduct of the British forces before, during and after the war fare any better.

Lest we forget it must be pointed out that the British army in the east was not there to protect the natives like myself. They were there to protect your own interests, which were procured through means both foul and fair. The tin mines in Malaya which were opened up during the British occupation were death-traps that devoured countless lives. In some of them the mortality rate suffered by the coolies was as high as 50 percent. Yet none of this is ever brought to your readers' attention. After the war the British army also committed its fair share of post-war atrocities: it is a well-known fact that British troops had the somewhat peculiar habit of cutting off heads and keeping them as mementos and trophies.

My family, like many others, suffered under the Japanese occupation for five years. But they all felt betrayed by the British who in the end opted to save their own skins. However, this does not mean that their lot was any better during the British occupation itself — my grandfather, like many other Malays, was denied the opportunity to study medicine on the grounds that like all wogs he was better off as a ward nurse instead. So please take some time off to look in the mirror once in a while.

Japan has apologised to us, when will you?

Have a nissan day,
FARISH A. NOOR,

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Make the breast of it

Sir,

Cyclops ***must*** *be corrected (Crossword 97, 4/18 dn. Ans. "Silicon Implant"!) Really? Silic****on****, atomic no.14, is a non-metallic element found in quartz, flint and other hard minerals. Silic****one****(s), with a long "o", are* ***organic*** *compounds of silic****on*** *and are widely used in polishes, lubricants, rubbers and breast implants.*

The confusion over the difference is common among both journalists and the public. Uninformed journalists who repeat the error lend authority to the mistake, thereby perpetuating it.

(Who wants flint tits, for God's sake? Any suggestions?)

Yours faithfully,
PHIL HOLMES,

Allestree, Derby.

As of Now

Sir,

I write to set the record straight on a number of errors in the HP Sauce piece on Cllr James Winston in EYE *941.*

You report that James Winston is secretary of Democracy Now. In fact, James stood down as secretary over two years ago and I now hold this position.

The piece goes on to claim that Democracy Now is a "pro-Unions" Labour pressure group. This is not the case. Democracy Now campaigns to give people resident in Northern Ireland the right to join the Labour party. Democracy Now takes no position on the Union.

Yours,
DAVID S. TAYLOR,

Secretary, Democracy Now.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"After all, we've had two thousand years' notice of the Millennium..."
JOHN HUMPHRYS, Radio 4
(Bill Goodge)

"He [Nigel Mansell] is a highly experienced driver with an unblemished record of accidents."
SAMANTHA COHEN, Daily Express
(Paul Newport)

Whitstable bow out with heads held high.
Headline, Whitstable Times
(Brenda Rowe)

"Locals object to the public being allowed into Princess Diana's grave."
Newsdirect Radio
(Peter Gibbs)

Mike Allen: *How is your Latin?*
Contestant: *Comme ci, comme ca.*
Mike Allen: *Good.*
Talk Radio
(Kenneth Fairley)

Safety in numbers

Sir,

*Re: Signal Failures. I must respond to Dr B. Ching's article in your esteemed organ (*EYE *942) and in particular the suggestion that HSE is blasé about railway safety.*

Your readers may have got a very distorted picture of our carefully balanced assessments which appear in the Annual Report on Railway Safety for 1996/97 (published on 1 December 1997).

It is said that "how safety has improved is hard to fathom from the report". Dr B. clearly did not note that:

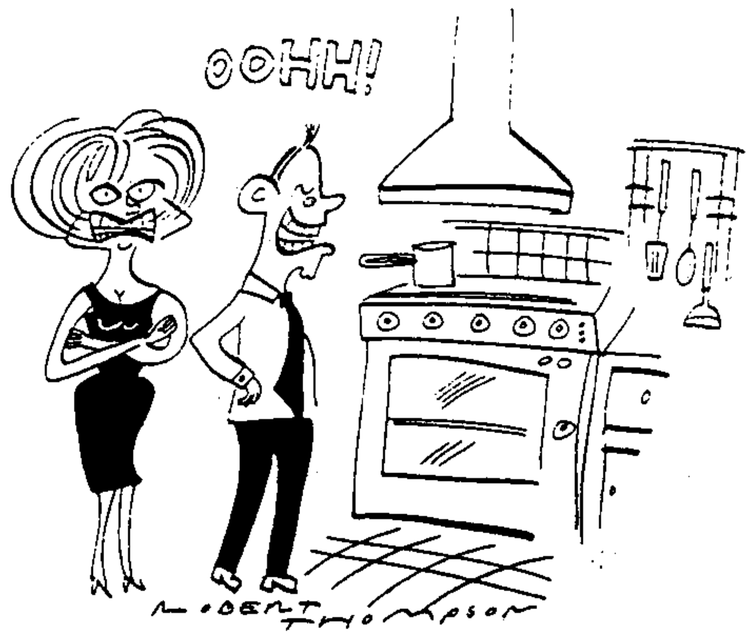
- *the total number of fatalities, excluding trespassers and suicides, is, at 25, the lowest on record;*
- *the number of falls from train slams doors [sic], 2, again the lowest on record;*
- *the number of railway staff killed on duty, 2, again the lowest on record.*

Credit where it is due! However, such statistics cannot tell the whole story. A great deal needs to be, and was, said about what is unsatisfactory, where there is the potential for accidents and the scope for improvement. I recall that both the press and parliament, at the time of publication, considered the report to be a tough one.

I have no intention of cancelling my subscription and I would be happy to buy Dr B. Ching a small alcohol free beer and correct any misconceptions he may still harbour.

Yours sincerely,
S.S.J. ROBERTSON,

HM Chief Inspector of Railways, London SE1.



New Labour, New Kitchen

Spokesmen

Sir,

In Heritage News, what you purport to be contradictory denials from Earl Spencer and Sir Jocelyn Stevens concerning English Heritage's mooted takeover of Althorp are, in fact, entirely consistent.

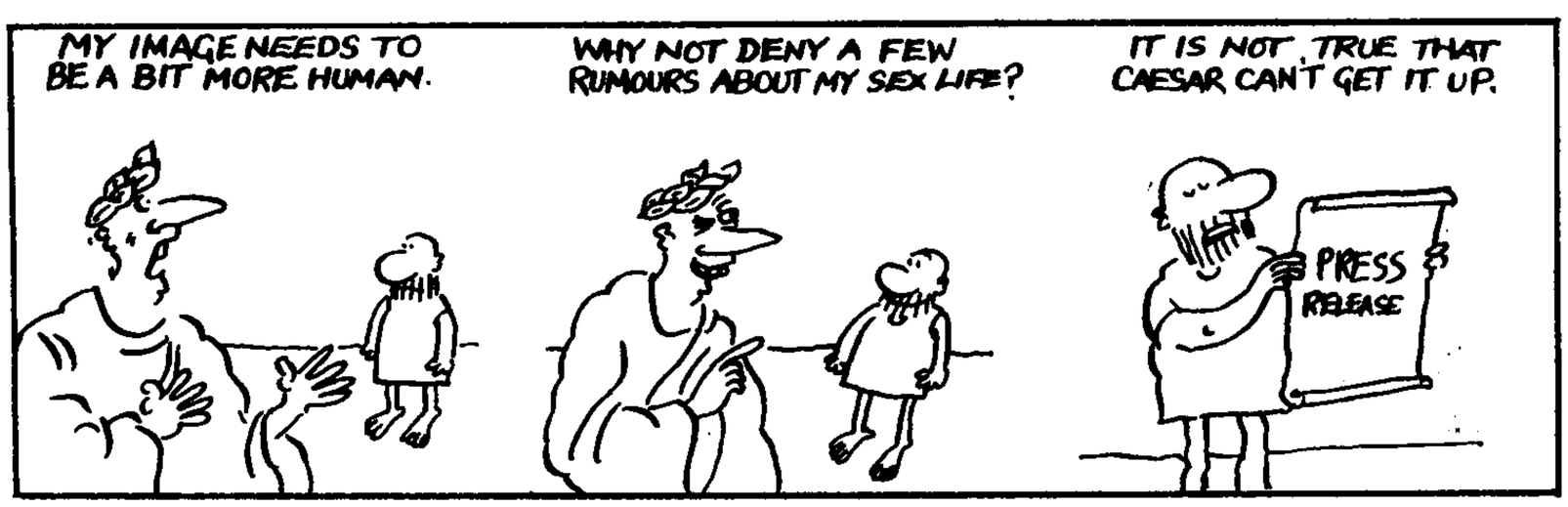
While Spencer claims "they have spoken", Stevens claims "I have never met the man [Spencer]". Clearly, a telephone was employed to avoid a physical encounter.

JAMES CLARKE,

Via e-mail.

PS: If you're going to be petty-minded and vindicative, there are better fugging targets than the man who said about the royals what the populace only dared to think.

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN


MY IMAGE NEEDS TO BE A BIT MORE HUMAN.
WHY NOT DENY A FEW RUMOURS ABOUT MY SEX LIFE?
IT IS NOT TRUE THAT CAESAR CAN'T GET IT UP.
PRESS RELEASE

LUVVIES

"Leo knows he's got sex-appeal and he knows how to use it. Yet he doesn't think that he's gorgeous. And to me, he's simply smelly, farty Leo."

KATE WINSLET
(on her Titanic co-star, Leonardo Di Caprio)

FUNNY OLD WORLD

'Due to a horrific blunder and mental blockage on my behalf, my previous letter to this newspaper may have given some of your readers the wrong idea about my views.

'In that letter, entitled "An Innocent Source of Pleasure," I wrote that "while lap dancing may cause dislike or antagonism to some, it is also a source of pleasure, exercise, and fun to others. A number of over-70s' clubs have added it to their

list of activities, and found it a welcome and enjoyable diversion, both to partake in or to watch. I say live and let live!"

'Can I make it quite clear to readers that I wrote that letter with *line* dancing in mind. I totally agree with previous readers' views about lap dancing, which is an entirely different species of entertainment. I apologise for any distress my error may have caused. Yours sincerely, W. Hyde.' *(Streatham Guardian, 8/1/98. Spotter — A. McLachlan)*

—o—

o *"You've gotta wonder how people who are smart enough to hack their way past computer security programs could be so stupid," Sergeant Jim Ryan told reporters in Bloomington, Minneapolis. "They broke the online security encryption on dozens of web sites, and stole hundreds of credit card numbers without leaving any trace... and then gave us their home addresses."*

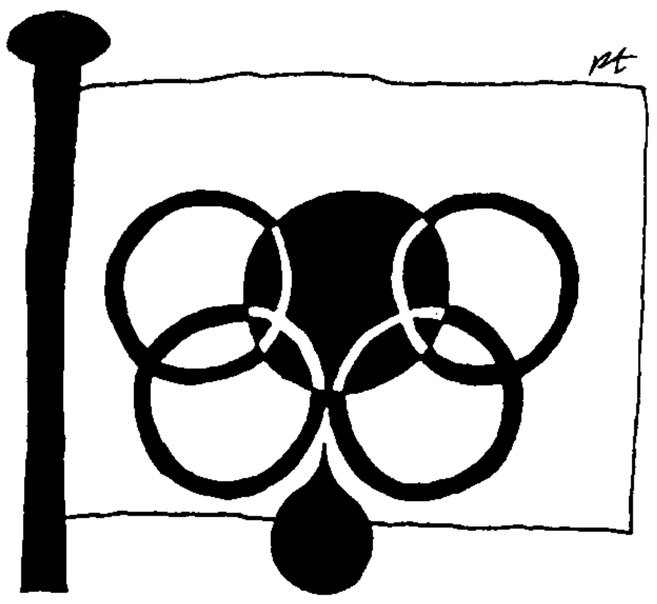
Ryan was speaking following the arrest of five juveniles, on charges of felony theft. "They got the credit card numbers by hacking into Internet shopping sites, and used them to order hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of merchandise. Cellular phones, computers, car stereos, computer scanners, the lot. Somehow, it never occurred to them that giving their home addresses for delivery of the equipment might be the weak link in their plan. Once the credit card companies alerted us, we'd rounded all five of them up within an hour. Most of the people we arrest don't even know how to switch a computer on, let alone crack top security codes, but I swear they're smarter than this bunch." (The Leader-Post, Regina, 20/8/97. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

—o—

o "This is not creative advertising at all. This is just filth," Japanese diplomat Keisuke Ikegami told reporters in Oslo. "The advertisement contains an unmistakable image of our national flag, and is an outrageous insult to the people of Japan. We have sent a strongly-worded letter of protest to the newspaper and to the company, and we insist that such misuse of our national symbol must not occur again."

Ikegami was complaining about an advertisement which had appeared in a Norwegian newspaper, comparing the Japanese flag to a used sanitary towel.

"This so-called advertisement showed a white sanitary towel with a bright red circle of blood in the middle, and it had the words 'we wish the female participants luck in the Winter Olympics in Nagano' written in Japanese-style script underneath. Our national flag, which symbolises the rising sun, is a red circle on a white background. The two are identical, and the insult is unmistakeable."

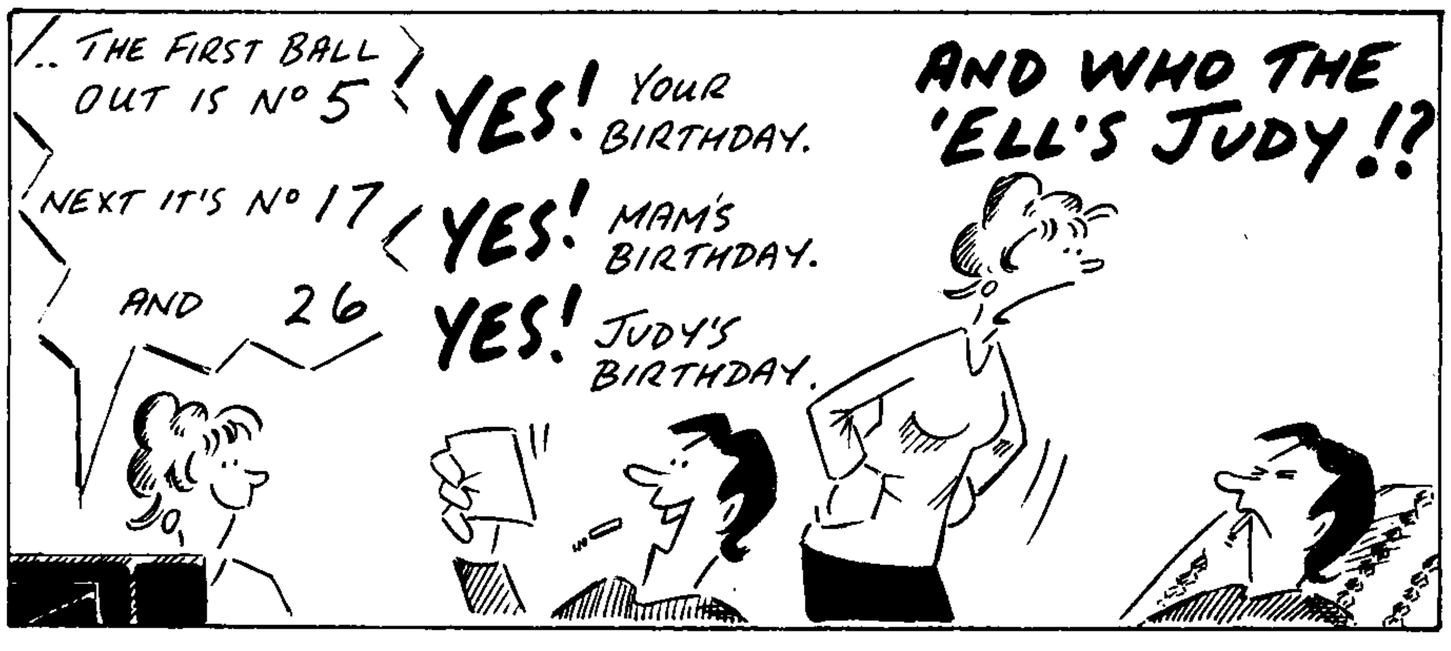


A spokesman for SABA Molynlycke, the Swedish company who manufacture the sanitary towel in question, said that they regretted any offence caused by the ad, and would not run it again. *(Verdens Gang [Norway] 18/1/98. Spotter: Ralph Stainbank)*

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

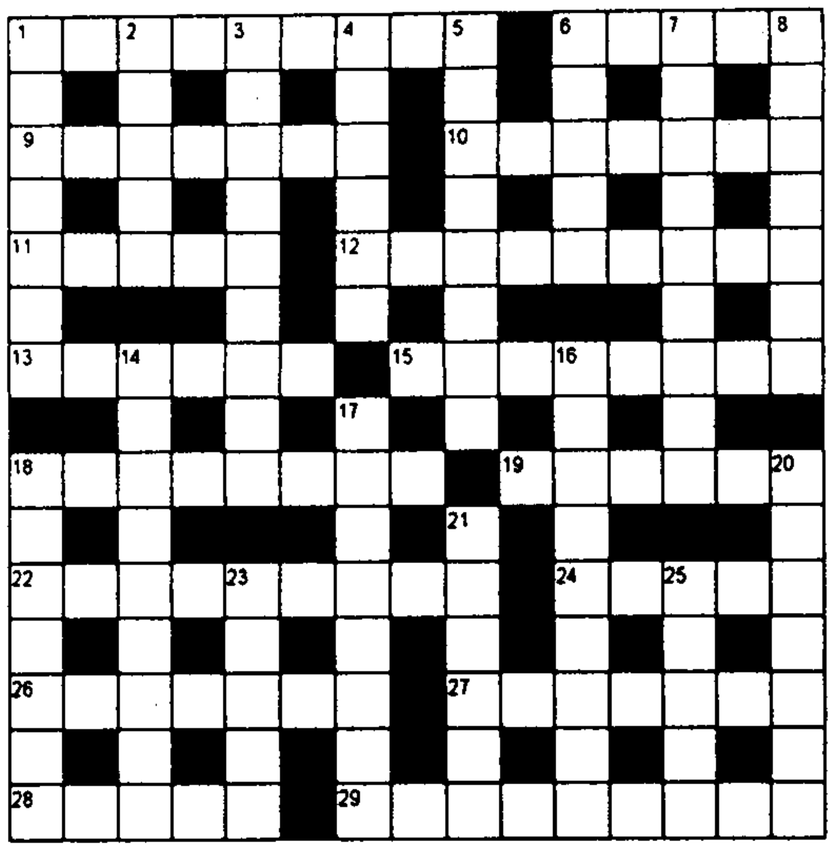
The Lottery Winners

TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 98

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1/19 That insane institute, parliament? A refuge of the expelled anti-government type? (9,6)
6 BSE-nobbled runner finally falls before second race (5)
9 Treasury gains from backing Brussels — not in a month of Sundays! (7)
10 (see 21)
11 Some nice Lebanese strip (5)
12 Top dog (cat?) whose job it is to push the business through (5,4)
13 Singularly spectacular ex-fighter? (6)
15 Trouble-maker, top grade stupid bastard and key Conservative getting end away (8)
18 Obscene discharge on which you may well have to pay tax (5,3)
19 (see 1ac.)
22 Vacillating oily brat, Mandelson finally makes leader! (4,5)
24 Something stuck in the guts of villains, etc. (5)
26 Game to enter gay movement, but the Japanese PM's not considered big enough? (7)
27 Every issue of our mag makes you agog! (3,4)
28 Riff-raff queen gobbled by policeman (5)
29 Need scoop desperately? This will give an intrusive view of someone's private parts (9)

DOWN

1 Swanky, as Brenda might say, transport (7)
2 Even Stephen, when connected, is rank (5)
3 A minister sportingly bonks any time (4,5)
4 Force that's firm with Brenda and the Church (6)
5 Administered by whips a great deal (8)
6 Straw tied up? Involved in hash, 'E', affirmedly (5)
7 Al Fayed's accommodation of court orders, reportedly the latest thing with the Spanish (4,5)
8 Point to cry-baby footballer (7)
14 Sniff an opening as a yes-man? (5-4)
16 Try putting deceptive slice on balls (9)
17 Incapacitate regimental soldier with whoppers by the sound of it (8)
18 Ring model, for example, up to have sex (3,4)
20 *Times* as revamped by artful foreign exhibitionist (7)
21/10 "One's part bred somehow to hold court initially" — as pompously held by Brenda (3,3,7)
23 Love being surrounded by Maxwell's knockers (5)
25 Utter "darn" aloud — it's only someone's word (3-2)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 06.02.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 97

Winner: PHIL REES

ACROSS: 7 New Delhi 8 Tycoon 9/10 Millennium Dome 10 (see 9) 11 Smudge 13 Oddballs 14 Adjusts 16 Branson 19 Altruism 21 Sacked 23 Anus 24 Jolly Roger 26 Keen on 27 No excuse.

DOWN: 1 Yeti 2 Addled 3 Blunkett 4/18 Silicon implant 5 Acid rain 6 Formula One 8 Timid 12 Mudslinger 15 Uprising 17 Restyled 18 (see 4) 20 Injun 22 Crotch 25 Easy.

'SAVE BALDY'S MEDALS' — WIFE'S TEARFUL PLEA

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man At The Francis Bacon Exhibition At The Hayward Gallery *(shome mishtake surely? Ed.)*

THE SOCCER world was rocked to its foundations yesterday by the news that Marilyn Pevsner, 68, estranged wife of Neasden FC's own-goal wizard "Baldy" Pevsner, is to sell her husband's priceless collection of soccer memorabilia.

"I am gutted that I have to do this," she told newsmen yesterday, "but financial circumstances leave me no alternative. I now call upon the Government to step in and save the collection for the nation."

Moore Means More

Reporters were yesterday given a glimpse of what Marilyn described as "Neasden's Crown Jewels".

Taking the lid off an old shoebox she revealed:

● Commemorative set of medals of 1966 World Cup, mounted on simulated velvet with legend "With the compliments of Lex Garages, Wembley Road. Score every time with Lex. Manager: P. Middleton Davis" (Nobby Stiles and Geoff Hurst missing)

● Collection of cups dated 1973-1979 commemorating various North Circular tournaments with assorted legends, including "Nice one Baldy", "Sack Ron Knee" and "Ooh-ah Wally Foot!"

A Sotheby's spokesman yesterday described the Pevsner collection as "literally priceless".

"I wouldn't pay any price for it whatsoever," he said.

LATE SCORE

North Circular Relegation League

Manchester United 0
Neasden 0

MAN OF MATCH: Neasden's exciting No. 4 shirt ex-President Mobutu of Zaire

Radio 3

Test Match Special

Christopher Martin Jenkins *(for it is he)*: And we welcome listeners with the astonishing news that Geoffrey Boycott is out. Geoffrey?

Borecott: 'Appen I've never been out like this. It's a reet disgrace. These BBC t'boogers tuppeny ha'porth bread wi' nowt taken out, t'BBC know booger all about t'battering. Y'can't treat t'woman with kid gloves. You've got to get stook in and show her who's t'boss. Once you've got your eye in you can knock her's out and hit t'lass all round t'bedroom. Aye, they don't make t'wife-beaters like they used to. I can remember at Headingley in 1963 *(Cont 94KHz)*

Last week the project's creative designer Stephen Bayley quit his £90,000-a-year post in a clash of egos with the dome's overlord, Labour's Minister without Portillo Peter Mandelson.

Khaleej Times

A Downing Street aide said, "The Opposition is seeking to make out that things are different under this Government. They are not.

Dundee Courier & Advertiser

she kept an eye upon the milkman and the baker's boy, and made visitations to the butcher, who sold hundreds of oxen very likely with less ado than was made about Mrs. Sedley's loin of mutton; and she counted the potatoes under the joint on Sundays, on which days, dressed in her best, she went to church twice, and read Blair's Sermons in the evening.

Vanity Fair

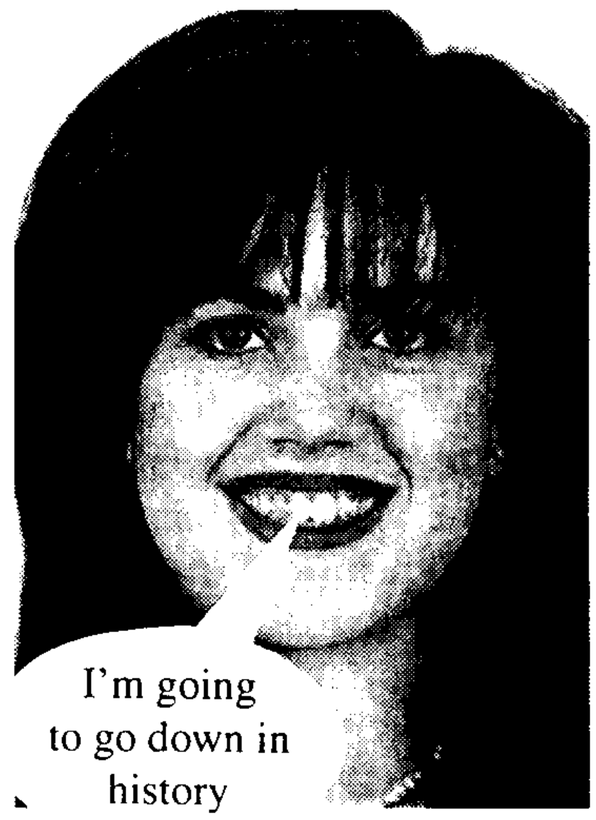
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ART EXPERT TO SPOT THE USE OF GRATUITOUS SACKS

BBC Highlights

Monday 9.30pm (BBC1)
The Drycleaners
A BBC fly-on-the-wall documentary takes the lid off the world of dry-cleaning. Tonight Mrs Burkiss throws a wobbly when a customer complains that the wine stain on his tie is still visible. Sparks fly.

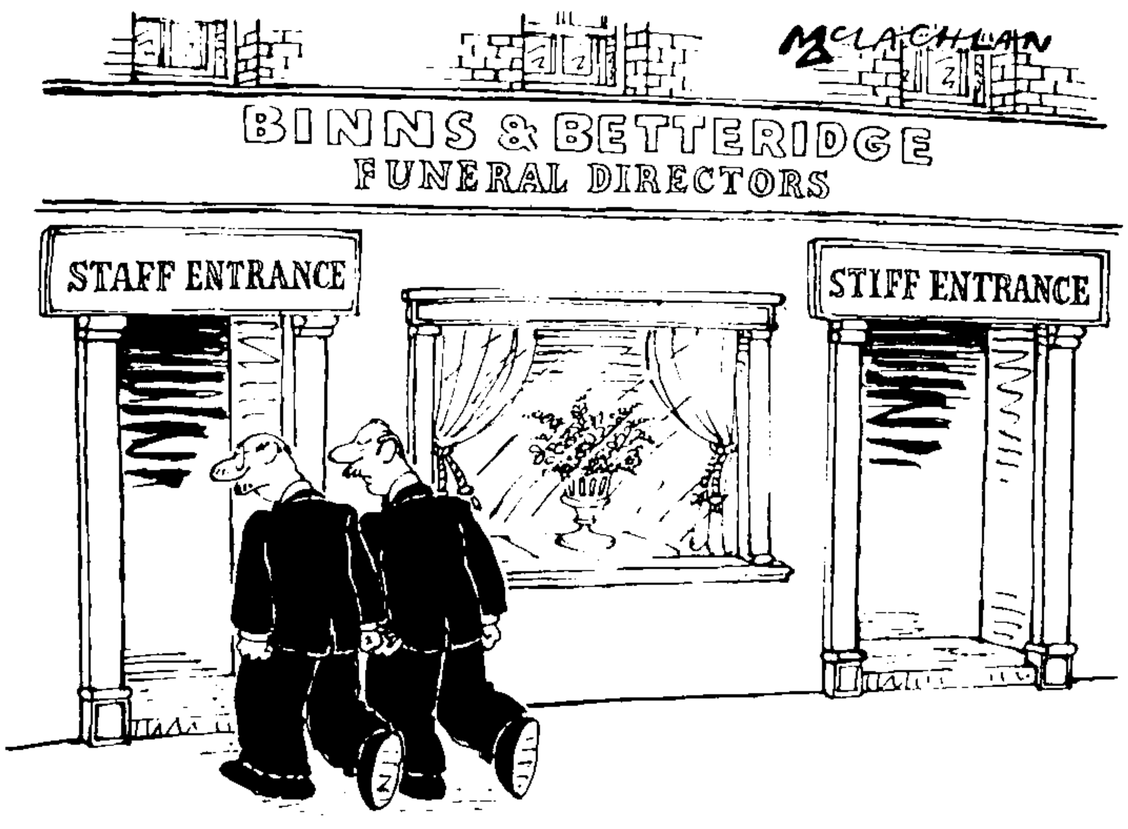
Tuesday 10pm (BBC2)
Cashpoint!
Fly-on-the-wall BBC cameras observe customers at a cashpoint in Whitstable. Tempers flare in the queue when an OAP feeds her kidney donor card into the machine by mistake.

Wednesday 8.30pm (BBC1)
The Pizza Men
Fly-on-the-wall BBC documentary



I'm going to go down in history

camera follows the fortunes of trainee Pizza delivery men Herroll and Steve as they "do the Pizza Knowledge" of South Luton.



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

I am writing to you from the table in our kitchen, which is not, as some of you seem to think, fitted out with expensive new units from designer shops paid for out of Church collections!

It is true that Cherie and I have recently put in a few essential pieces of new equipment which the PCC has very kindly helped to finance from the Fabric Fund.

But what sort of a parish is it that says, "Sorry vicar, you can't have an ice-cube maker, a cappuccino machine or a new hob with automatic extractor fan"?

Envy is a most unattractive quality, but I have to say that it is becoming much too prevalent in certain circles in this parish.

Mr Lairg had to put up with it about his wallpaper.

Mr Cook suffered wagging tongues when he needed somewhere to live with his new partner.

And when we provided Mrs Beckett with a flat near the church, just so that she could perform her duties more effectively, you would think she'd robbed the poor box to hear some people talk!

As Our Lord himself said, "Unto them that hath, shall more be given." *(New Labour Bible, Mark 8.7)*

And don't forget the second bit, all of you who are going on about our review of the Church welfare programme!

"From them that hath not shall be taken away even that they hath." *(Mark 8.8)*

And while I am on the subject of people who are bitter and twisted about other people's success in this life, could I repeat what I said in last Sunday's Sermon (what a pity Mr Brown couldn't find the time to be there).

I took as my theme that very important text "Greater love hath no man than this: that he should lay down his lifetime ambition for his friend." *(Revelation of St John Smith)*

Many of us, I think, sometimes find ourselves in the situation where we have to sacrifice our hopes and dreams in favour of someone more suited to the job, because he is more talented, more pivotal and more focused.

The important thing surely is to do it with a good grace, and not get their friends to write about it afterwards in a particularly unhelpful way.

It suggests that the person concerned has serious psychological flaws, and may well get a very frosty response from Cherie when he next comes round to borrow a cup of sugar!

Anyway, that's what I said in the sermon and with any luck the message will have gone out to all our friends and neighbours (particularly the one who lives next door!).

After all, didn't the Bible say something about "loving your neighbour". And that means not going round making snide remarks about him in the Cool Britannia Arms!

I hope I will not have to return to this theme again!

Yours more in anger than in sorrow,

Tony

Your Letters

Dear Sir,

I wish to complain in the strongest terms about the way I was recently dismissed by Mr Cook from the post of Parish Diary Secretary. He said I was "impossible to work with". That is pretty rich, coming from him! We all know that the only reason why he wanted me out was that he wanted to bring in his

yours sincerely
Anne Bullen (Mrs),
Hurd End.

The Editor reserves the right to cut letters for reasons of space. A. Campbell.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed"
(Ecclesiastes 17.4)

From The Churchwarden, Mr Mandelson

Let me make it clear, once and for all, that I am not engaging in any further correspondence about what we are going to put in the Millennium Tent. I have got many more important things to occupy my time, such as thinking of what to put in the Millennium Tent. PM.

(Well said! TB)

To be Sung at Evensong this Sunday

CHORUS: I am the Lord of the Lairg
(Trad)
HYMN: Our Trust is in the Offshore
(arranged Robinson)
ANTHEM: Mandelssohn's Aliar
(I think this should be Elijah? T.B.)

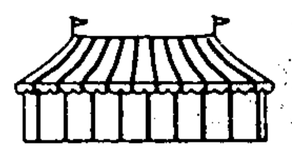
To Remember In Your Prayers

Our very good friend the Rev William Jefferson Clintstone III, who visited Cherie and I on several of his evangelical missions to England. Now Bill is facing some very unpleasant accusations from a large number of female members of his own congregation. Let's give Bill the benefit of the doubt and our prayerful support at what is a very difficult time for him and his charming wife Hillary. Let's not rush to be judgemental on this one, despite what the evidence may suggest! TB

Notices

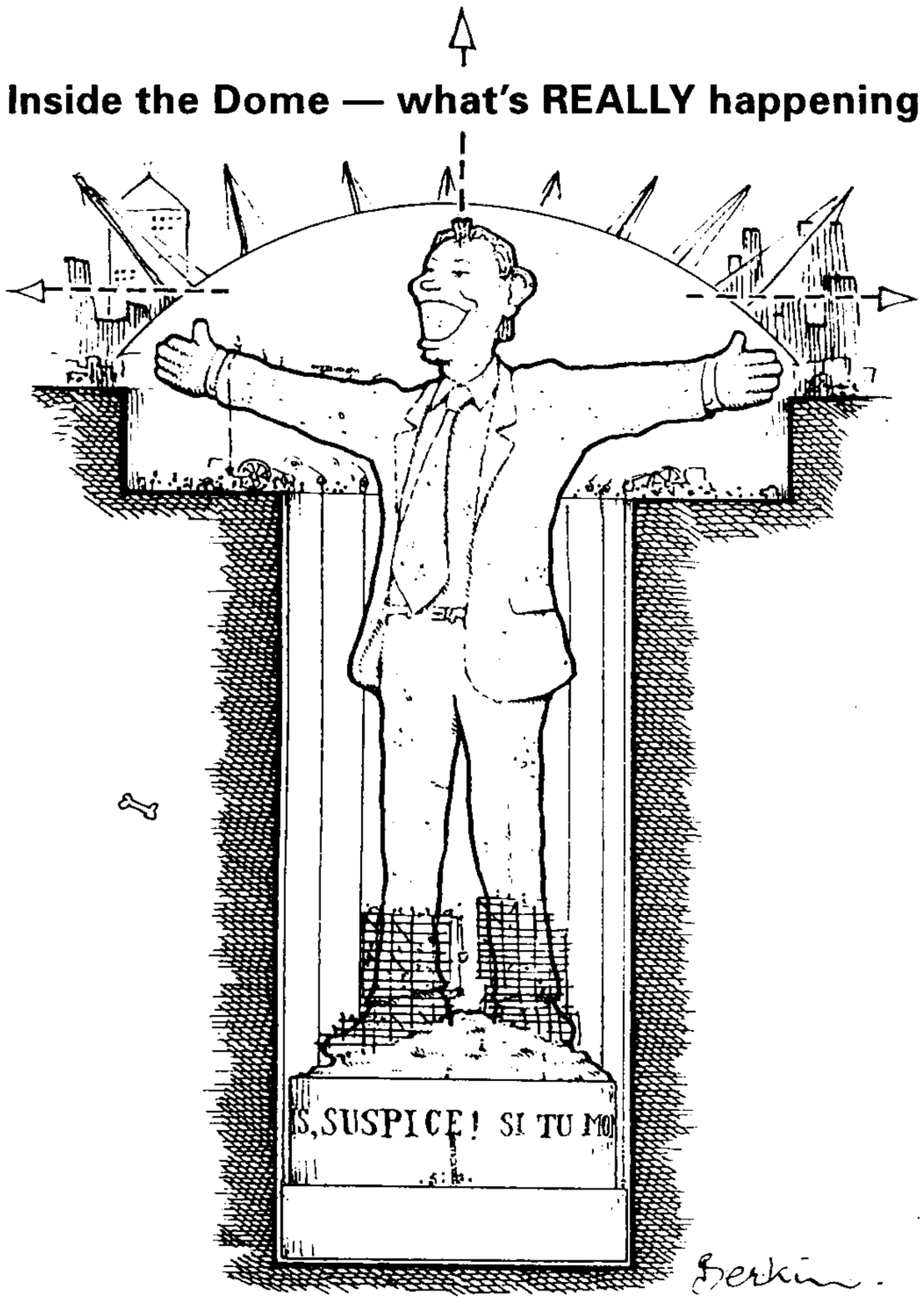
● **8.00 p.m. Thursday**. The vicar will be giving a talk in the Church Hall on ***"The Importance of Marriage"***. All are welcome and do feel free to bring your partners, new friends, significant others etc. Food and drink will be provided for everyone.

Verses By A Local Poet



What are we all giving up for Lent?
Being negative about the Millennium Tent!

A. Yentob, Manager the TV Rental Centre, the High Street.



The full text of President Clintstone's State of the Onion Address

The President *(takes something out of his trousers, probably an onion. Weeps copiously)*: Mah fellow Americans. As the great George Washington said, when his father caught him with his chopper in his hand and a girl called Cherry: "I cannot tell a lie." Which is why I have been advised by my lawyers not to say anything further at this time. God bless Miss America! There's one hell of a dame!

(President is ushered offstage by Mrs Hillary Roddam Clintstone)

Mrs President Clintstone: Mah fellow Americans. In the words of the immortal Tammy Wynette, this is all a real sinister, right-wing plot to assassinate my man, and to replace him as President with some form of extra-terrestrial Newt. Don't you believe what they tell you, do you hear me? They're all liars, ah tell you.

(Mrs Clintstone is ushered off stage by President Saddam Hussein)

President Hussein: My fellow Iraqis *(contd. p. 94)*

A Doctor writes **Hip Operations**

AS a doctor I am often asked, "Can you churn out 1000 words on the Queen Mother's hip replacement?"

The simple answer is: "Yes, of course, as soon as I've finished the piece on Kate Winslett's weight problem."

What happens in these cases is that the doctor writes a very long article and then puts in a big medical diagram (*graphicus superfluus normalis*) to fill up the space. Thus a genuine article can be replaced by a false, manufactured one.

Of course, there may be side effects for the reader, such as drowsiness and nausea, but the operation is usually a great success for the doctor who can walk away with a lot of money within weeks.

If you are worried about filling your pages, please contact me at once.

© *A Doctor.*

LATE NEWS

WOMAN SUES CLINTON OVER SEX SCANDAL

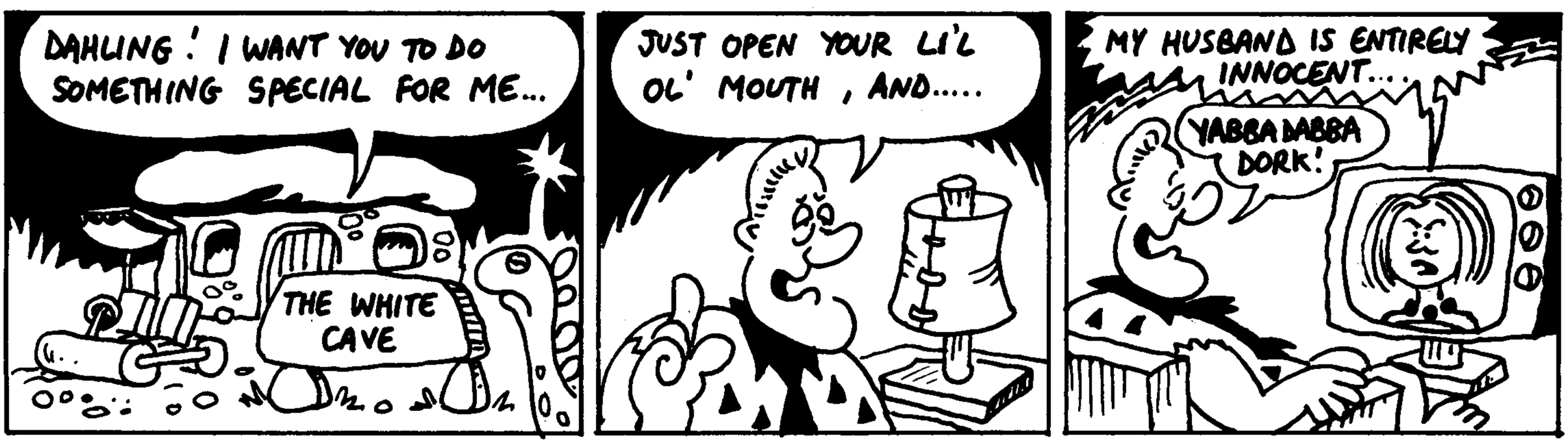
An American woman who once met the President at a White House social function has sensationally claimed that "he did not have casual sex with me".

The woman claims the President made a number of asexual remarks to her, such as "What do you do then?" and "Where are you from?"

She is now suing him for loss of earnings, claiming over £1 million in chat show, newspaper, film and book fees.

(Reuter)

MEET THE CLINTSTONES - THE PREHISTORIC FIRST FAMILY


DAHLING! I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR ME...
THE WHITE CAVE
JUST OPEN YOUR LI'L OL' MOUTH, AND.....
MY HUSBAND IS ENTIRELY INNOCENT....
YABBA DABBA DORK!

GLENDA SLAGG

☆ *Fleet Street's First Lady*

BILL CLINTON!?! What a low-down dirty rat?!?!

A-cheatin' and a-bleatin' on Hillary, his loyal little lady!?!

With his zipper open and his flies undone — doesn't he make you wanna throw up?!?!?

I say, impeachin's too good for this two-timin' love-cheat, who's dragged the good name of the US Presidency in the world's gutter!?!?

Come on, the Ku Klux Klan!? Get your lynchin' gear on, and let's see old Bill Clinton a-danglin' from the nearest tree!!?!

I SAY hats off to naughty Bill Clinton!?!

And knickers too, if he asks me!!?

Thank Gawd there's one red-blooded male left in America, who's got the balls to go a-shaggin' and a-braggin' wherever he can!?!?!

Leave him alone, Mr Media Man!

I bet there are a million gals out there who are queuin' up to get a bit of the action in that lil' ol' Oval Office!?!

Mmmmmm!!!

ROBIN COOK!? What a low down dirty rat!!! (You've done this one. Ed.)

KATE WINSLET?!! Thank Gawd there's one gorgeous gal who's not afraid to show her curves!?!!

That's what the fellas really like — a pair of golden globes that are really Tit-anic!!? Geddit?

Everyone's going overboard for this gal!! Geddit?!

COME off it, fatty Winslet!?! No wonder the Titanic sank with you on board!?!

Hey, tell you what, Two-Ton Katie!!

Next time they film Moby Dick you can play the whale?!!!

Here's a tip from Auntie Glenda. Why don't you lay off the cream cakes, Kate, and stick to iceberg lettuce!?! Geddit?

THE QUEEN Mother, God bless you, ma'am!?!

What a wonderful example to us all!?

What courage!! What bravery!! What steadfast devotion to duty!!

It makes you proud to be British!!?!

Altogether everyone — hip, hip, hooray!! Geddit?

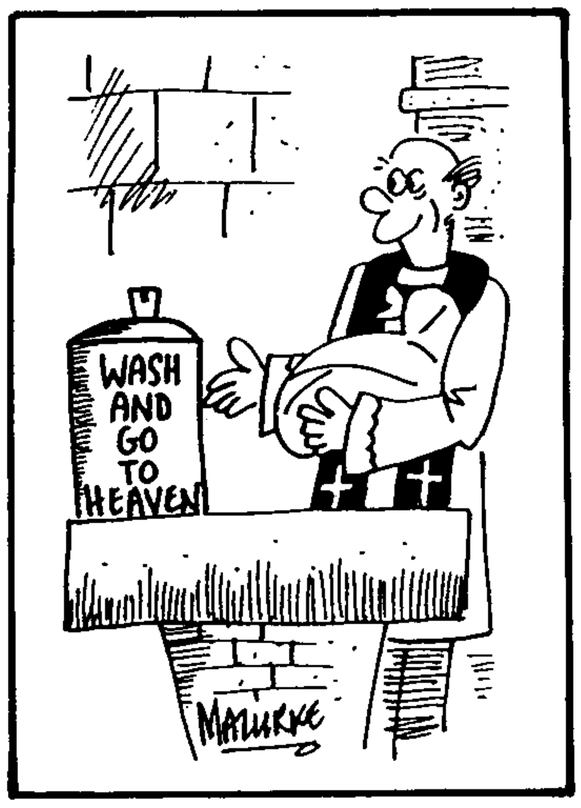
HAVE WE all gone stark staring bonkers!?

So, a little old lady falls over and has to go to hospital!?!

Is that a story, or what?

The only thing you can be sure about is that if it was your granny or mine, she'd be stuck on a trolley in the corridor for 48 hours before anyone noticed!?

Doesn't it make you sick?!



HERE they are, Glenda's February Full Montys.

F.W. de KLERK. South Africa's answer to Robin Cock!?!!

KEN HOM. The sexiest chef in the Orient. You can come round to my "hom" for a "wok on the wild side" anytime!?! Geddit?!

EDDIE IZZARD. Crazy name!! Crazy gal!!

Byeeeee!!

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath**

30. The Millennium Boredome

"... it's a total waste of money isn't it? mind you it could be incredible and it's not just going to be like Disneyland apparently they are going to have a Teletubbies Through the Millennium Avenue and you will be able to walk around Tinky Winky's veins as though you were his life blood which should be amazing and there's going to be a Mr Bean in Space Theme Podule with a giant Bean Space-Mini that circumnavigates the dome and a British Sporting Heroes' Coffee bar with a scale model of Geoff Hurst's football boots and a lifesize model of one of Roger Bannister's bannisters it'll be like Planet Hollywood and the British Film Industry Fun Sector sounds amazing you put on a virtual reality headset and feel like you are Colin Welland and you have to run in slow motion down a tunnel kissing four brides and avoiding a funeral cortege and when you reach the finishing post a hologram of Anthony Hopkins appears to shake your hand and one of Emma Thompson bursts into tears and then a giant Robert Carlyle shouts 'Fuck' it's going to be incredible though it's a total waste of money isn't it?"

CLINTON'S BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

Han-z-z-zard

3.15: President Blair's Question Time

Mr William Squitt *(Woebegone, Con)*: Could the Prime Minister explain why the taxpayers should have to pay for a new double bed for the Foreign Secretary's official residence, at a cost of £129.99? *(Tory cheers, cries of "Cooky Nooky!", "Resign!", etc)*

Mr Tony Blair *(Sedgemore, New Lab)*: I find it completely pathetic that the Rt Hon Gentleman should ask such a pathetic question. It just shows how pathetic he is, asking such a pathetic question.

(Labour cheers, cries of "We love you, Tony!", "Can I have a job when you've sacked Robin Cook?", etc)

Mr Squitt: I repeat my question. Can the Rt Hon Prime Minister explain the new bed? Yes or no.

Mr Blair: Alright. Yes, your question is pathetic. No *(takes out briefing note)* the last Conservative government spent more money on beds in the years 1983-8 than we have ever spent. They also spent 83 percent more on wallpaper, 56 percent more on travel for spouses and partners and no less than 198 percent more on Cheese-and-Onion Pringles at government functions. *(Labour cheers, cries of "Tony for king!", "Can we have a job when you've sacked Geoff Robinson, Harriet Harman, etc!")* I repeat. The Rt Hon Gentleman's question is pathetic. Why does the opposition concentrate on all these trivia, and never ask about our policies?

Mr Squitt: Because they are the same as ours. *(Uproar in House)*

Mr P. Ashtray *(Pantsdown, Old Lib Dem)*: Does anyone remember when I was at the centre of a sex scandal with my secretary?

(House empties as MPs rush for secretaries. Surely 'exits'? Ed.*)*

Yes! It's Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

Hot Goss!

Throbbin' ROBIN COOK, Blairzone's Bad Boy organist, will *not* be leaving the band as rumoured. And that's official. Band leader Tone scoffed at the rockbiz goss claiming that cocky cooky was unreliable because he quit the group's tour of India where they were supporting headline act, The Queen.

Said Tone, "Robin was tired and exhausted — at least he was after a weekend session with supergroupie Gaynor!"

Tone pleaded with fans and the media "to give the guy a break. Preferably a weekend break where he can slope off and get on down with his latest spouse!"

Mr Sex-retary's Smoochy Love Nest Lullabies

I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane (To See My Bird) — Peter, Paul and Married

We will, We Will Back You — The Queen

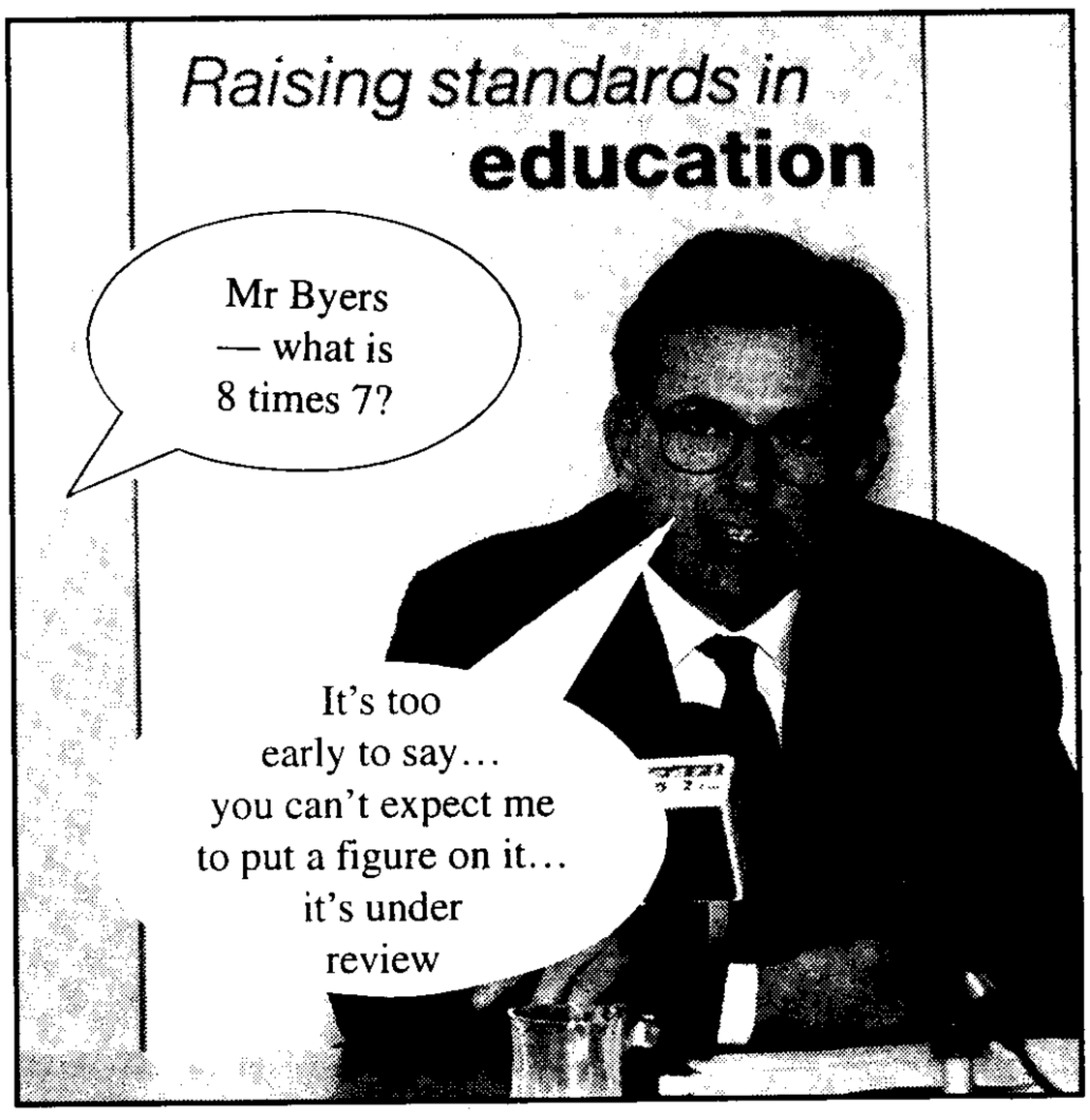
Stand By Your Man — Tony Wynvote

Cook Fuct

(surely 'fact'? Ed)

Britain's best-known Blairzone Babe, Glam Gaynor, says: "Robin is great in the sack. He sacked Anne Bullen without a second thought. What a guy!"

THE CORRECT ANSWER


Raising standards in education
Mr Byers — what is 8 times 7?
It's too early to say... you can't expect me to put a figure on it... it's under review

Starsky | von Tripp | Scoopawicz | Havitovsky | Bugloss | Rees-Moggsky

Who are they – the main players in the biggest scandal the world has ever known?

● United States Prosecutor **Hiram J. Starsky**. A remorseless investigator charged with probing the allegations of sexual impropriety made against President Clintstone by Paula Yatesky, 38, a Little Rock stenographer, who claims $10 billion compensation for "interper - sonal sexualistic invasionment" by the Presi - dent in an Arkansas motel room in 1971.

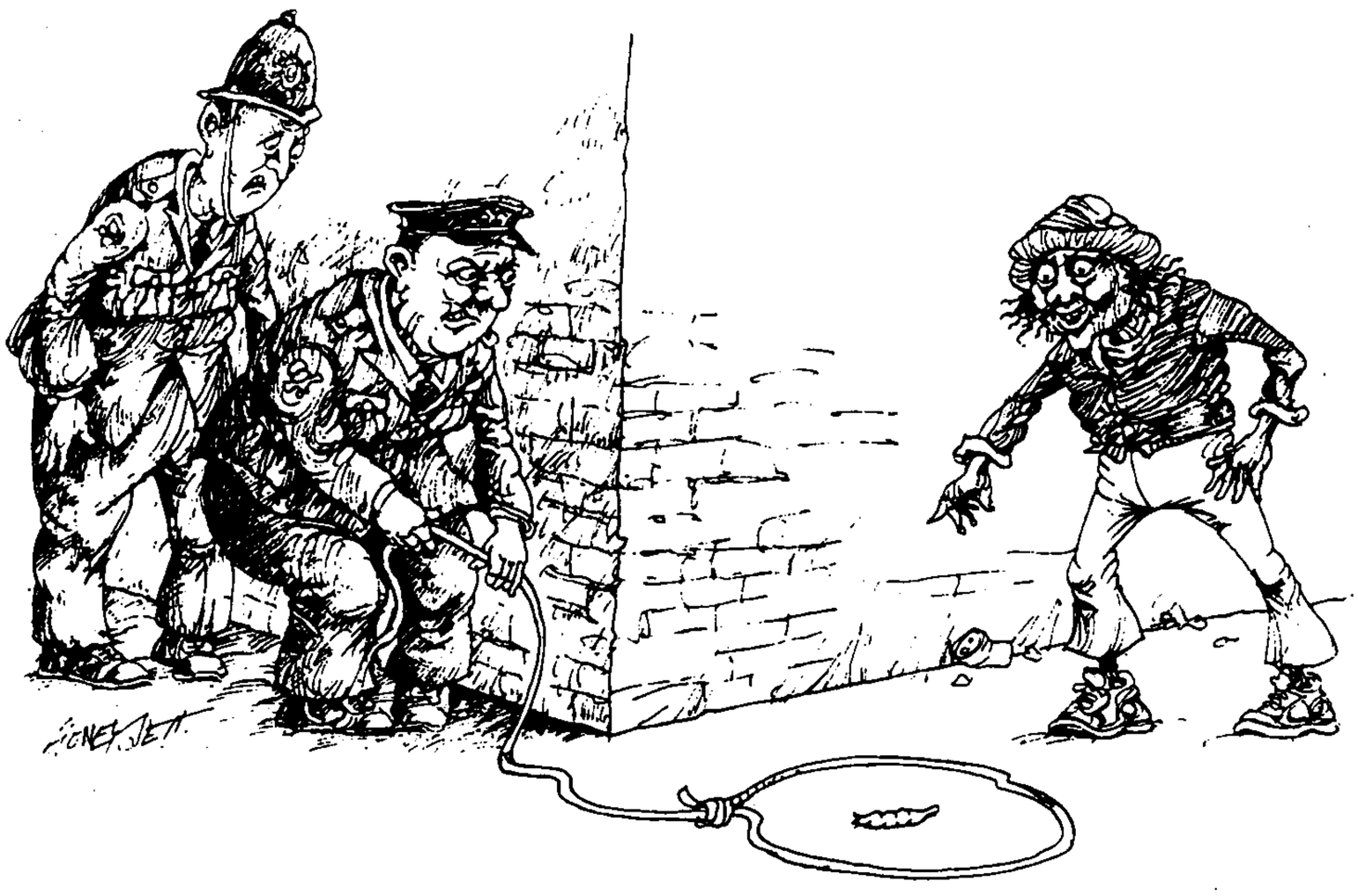
● **Maria von Tripp**. Former White House aide who agreed to act as agent provocateur for Starsky *(see above)*. Later she secretly taped conversations between herself and Monica Havitovsky, 21, *(see below)* who was sleeping with President Clintosterone as part of her work experience programme. She will be a key witness in any Congressional impeach - ment proceedings under Article 69 of the Con - stitution which forbids "acts of non-penetrative sexual oralisation between the President of the United States and any person or persons who are not his lawful wed - ded partner".

● **Sam Scoopawicz**, Chief Reporter of *Newsweek*, who bravely decided not to pub - lish the Clintstone-Havitovsky tapes which had been passed to him by von Tripp *(see above)* at the instigation of prosecutor Starsky but instead leaked them in full on the Internet.

● **Monica Havitovsky**, 21, the White House in - tern who admitted to von Tripp (see above) in 90 hours of tape-recorded interviews that she had enjoyed "non-penetrative oral relation - ship sessions" with President Jefferson Clin - toblerone whom she nicknamed "Gobbledygook". She has pleaded the Fifth Amendment through her lawyer Marvin Z. Toothbrush *(see below)* who is trying to win for his client immunity "from prosecution for per - jury after she was subpoenaed in the Paula Yatesky hearings" (see above).

● **Sylvester Bugloss Jr**, 48. High-school teacher and former lover of Havitovsky *(see above)*, Bugloss now claims that Havitovsky was a "compulsive fantasist" who told his wife Zedka Bugloss that she was having an af - fair with her husband, which she was.

● **William Rees-Moggsky**, 98, ageing British columnist and former Editor of the Times whose articles on the Clintstone scandal are read by no one. *(That's enough key players in the greatest scandal of the century. Ed.)*



"Are you sure this isn't entrapment, Sarge?"

"Cave paintings are out of date. This is the future of art!"

Thribb Wins Top Poetry Prize

by Our Poetry Editor **Lunchtime O'Vid**

THIS year's prestigious Times-Carling Black Label Literature Award, worth £2 million, has been won by the Times poet E.J. Thribb.

The Times-man's winning entry was a translation of Ovid's Metamorphosis, an obscure poem written by the 2,000 year old Roman poet Ovid.

Have We Got Hughes For You

Mr Thribb, 17½, did not attend the glittering award ceremony, held in London's swanky Times canteen in fashionable Wapping, but his prize was collected by his close friend Keith Boggis, 18¼, who is currently studying Media Studies at Thamesmedia University (formerly Sidcup Polytechnic).

The judges for the award were the Editor of the Times, Mr Peter Stothard, Mr Rupert Murdoch, proprietor of the Times, Miss Melinda Messenger of the Times's sister newspaper the Sun and the well-known Sky TV soccer pundit Mr Andy Gray.

All The Hughes That's Fit To Print

Mr Thribb's prizewinning version of Ovid's masterpiece runs as follows:

So. Farewell then
P. Ovidius Naso.

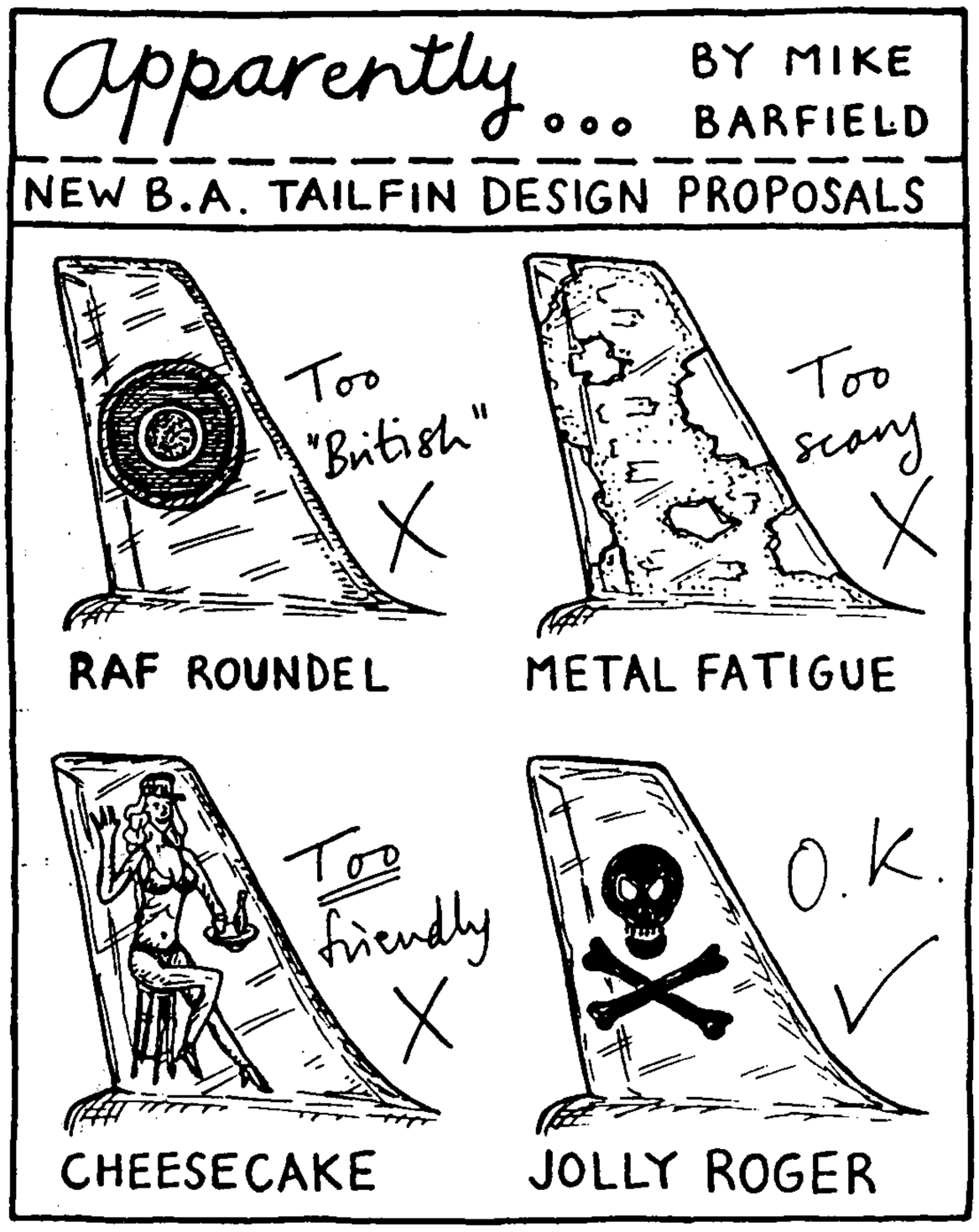
Known to his friends
As Horace,

According to Keith
Who did Classical Studies
For GCSE

And
Failed.

E. Jarvisius Thribbo (2017½)

©The Times MCMXCVIII



APOLOGY

IN 1993, *Private Eye* **published this front cover. We regret that due to a typographical error in the "speech bubble" the letter "f" was inadvertently printed instead of the intended letter, making the sentence both inaccurate and deeply offensive to Mr Clinton. The correct letter was, of course, an "s". We apologise for any confusion caused by our mistake.**

'CARE IN THE COMMUNITY TO BE SCRAPPED' says Blair

by TV Psychiatrist **Dr Chaj Perhour**

THE Government has announced an end to the controversial "care in the community" scheme which, according to the Prime Minister, has allowed "people with unfortunate psychological flaws to be let out onto the streets of London, particularly Downing Street".

Mr Blair cited the sad example of a Gordon B who, despite clear mental instability, was permitted to endanger innocent members of the public like himself with vicious and unprovoked attacks brought on by delusions of grandeur.

Said Mr Blair: "The man was obviously bonkers, talked gibberish to any biographer who would listen and most ludicrous of all actually believed that he was the Prime Minister.

"This man should be locked up in a secure institution such as the Treasury and should never be heard of again."

"As one of the most powerful men in the world, he had managed to get away with it in the past through having a coterie of protectors. He was probably a bit too cocky and overplayed his hand." *Scotsman*

This is provided for the Foreign Secretary as his home in the capital. It has five bedrooms, three bathrooms and a huge ballroom. *Mail on Sunday*

Celeb

LIGGER

WAH WAH
OH NO.
WAH WAH
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS, JOHNSON. I'VE ONLY JUST PUT LITTLE D'ARCY TO BED...
WAH
THE LITTLE MITE ISN'T A VERY GOOD SLEEPER IS HE?
WAH WAH
I'LL TELL SIR THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO REDISCOVER THE JOYS OF THE WAH WAH PEDAL...
BAWL: SCREAM HOLLER
TOO LATE.

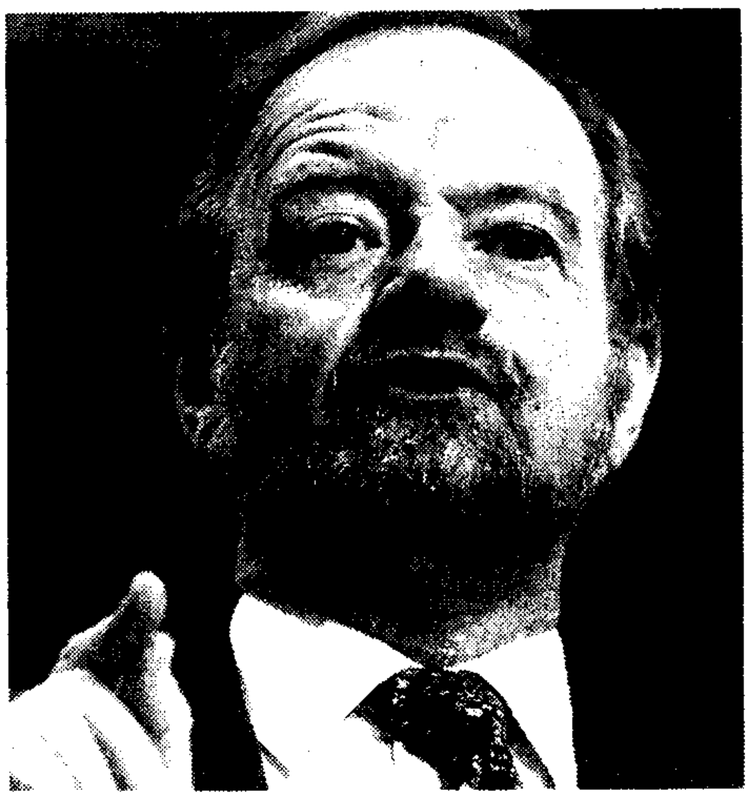
DIARY

OUT with the old, in with the new. That's life in the modernised Foreign Office. I made it clear from the outset that I would be getting rid of much of the pomp and circumstance from my office, cutting back on ceremony and extravagances and substituting something more appropriate to the 21st century. On the very first day, I paraded around my office to demonstrate to one and all my admirable lack of pomp. "This is the 21st century! We can't be having this kind of thing!" I exclaimed, pointing to a leather armchair, with all its crusty overtones of empire. I made my Private Secretary heave it away and replace it with a very modern and innovative water-bed, signalling the way ahead. All well and good, but I was still left with a large portrait in oils of some Maharajah or other. "Have we not got something a little more appropriate to our new forward-looking approach, a robust painting that will symbolise to the modern age where we stand on the world stage?" I demanded. My private secretary looked dumbfounded. "What sort of thing had you in mind, Foreign Secretary?" he asked.

"Modern portraits," I announced sagely, "lie well within our current budget for presentation. A full-sized oil painting of 'The Foreign Secretary and His Permanent Partner' might send out all the appropriate forward-looking signals to the world, don't you think?"

It was in Opposition that I first developed my reputation for a razor-sharp intellect — and let me assure any doubters that it is an intellect I continue to employ to no little effect in Government!

Of course, a large part of my duty as Foreign Secretary (how I dislike the sheer pomposity of that title — surely something like Foreign President would be more fitting to the demands of the 21st century?) lies in dealing with foreign ministers and heads of state on a diplomatic basis, posing for photographs, shaking hands, attending dinners, and so on. But let me assure you that this, too, requires the full range of my razor-sharp skills, only now on a more personal, less political level.



THE RT HON ROBIN COOK MP, PC

"I note," I remarked to Madeleine Albright towards the end of a formal dinner in Washington last week, "that you left most of your potatoes on the side of your plate. And yet I then noticed you — and there are abundant witnesses — gulping down your Crême Brûlée down in one. This is clear evidence of the growing conviction among ordinary decent people that you are battling against a weight problem which is fast spiralling out of control. Would the right honourable lady be good enough to give us a straight answer — yes or no? YES OR NO?"

This seemed to break the ice. The good lady stared down in horror at her empty dish — and I immediately sensed we had established rapport. But with some of our allies one cannot afford to be quite so open — and knowing how to judge just such a conversation requires razor-sharp skills. For instance, in my informal meeting with the Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs last month, I desperately wanted to ask him a question that had been bothering me — but needless I was determined to phrase it in the most diplomatic language!

"Tea? Coffee? Some other beverage, perhaps? It delights both me and my permanent partner muchly to be able to welcome you to our country Foreign Minister," I began, setting him at his ease. "And it would please me most beneficently if you would graciously deign to offer me an answer to something that has been on my mind for some time: would you agree with me that you are merely the puppet representative of a fat cat fascist state bent on feathering its own nest to the detriment of its people? Yes or no? YES OR NO?"

I am pleased to say that the good personal chemistry I have established in my negotiations with the US Secretary of State has resulted in a black box on my desk at the Foreign Office, concealing a personal hotline to Madeleine Albright — an apparatus notably absent under the previous administration. Two or three times a week, I pick up the hotline and I'm put right through in minutes. A distinct female voice, authoritative but always friendly, comes on the line. "The number you have dialled," she says, "has not been recognised. Please try again."

"Certainly, Madeleine. Thank you for that advice. Must go now — work to be done!" I reply forcefully. It all goes to show that when you're dealing with major world statespersons, there's nothing beats personal warmth.

There's been a lot of nonsense written in the Press about my new Permanent Partner, much of it mischievous, but let me tell you, inform you of, this. Around the international diplomatic dining tables, she is already gaining a reputation as an outstanding Ambassadress for the new Britain, able to "draw out" even the most reticent of our world statesmen. At a formal dinner last week, she gave a brilliant run-down to the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the best bus-routes from Pimlico to Kings Cross, avoiding the West End in rush hour, before turning to the Chinese Ambassador on her right and filling him in on all the latest bargains to be had from the new Littlewoods Catalogue. I note with interest that the post of Ambassador to France will shortly be falling vacant. Is it not time to blow away those fusty imperialist cobwebs and appoint a young outsider to the job — a woman, maybe? Yes or no? YES OR NO?

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

MMM..... WE'D LIKE TO SIGN YOU..... YOU'RE SO 'NOW'..... YOU'VE GOT WHAT WE CALL THE 'ALIEN' QUALITY
AGENCY
LATER:
HELLO.... I'M AN ALIEN ATTORNEY REPRESENTING ALL HIGH INTELLIGENT LIFE FORMS AND I'LL BE SUING YOU FOR COMPARING MY CLIENTS TO HUMAN MODELS.....

New Naval Sea Shanties

'Twas on the good ship HMS Venus
My God you should have seen us,
The officer was extremely good at his job,
But made some unfortunate remarks to
A Wren which were taken out of context.
(Case closed)

Literary Review

Sylvia Cringe

Birthday Letters
Ted Hughes
(Faber, £14.99)

EVEN here, in the dog-days of our literary culture, it's quaintly reassuring to witness the extraordinary levels of hype which an alliance of publishers and newspaper editors can still whip up for a book when they really put their minds to it.

Birthday Letters, the poet laureate's sequence of verses about his marriage to the late Sylvia Plath — a subject responsible for the premature death of millions of trees these 30 years or more — was published on 29 January. A good ten days before this, however, the broadsheets were already starting to explode with long-suppressed excitement.

The *Times* offered a week's worth of serialisation-cum-admiring critical commentary. Various pundits weighed in to declare that "there is nothing like it in literature" (A. Motion); that it was "the greatest book by our greatest living writer" (*Times* leader, natch); and that Hughes was the equivalent of, oh, I don't know, Browning, Blake, Keats and Auden.

What was all the fuss about? Well, the poems were apparently previously "unknown" (in fact, as the *TLS* caustically pointed out, several of them had already appeared in Hughes's *New Selected Poems 1957-1994*); and didn't they break Hughes's "silence" on the subject of poor suicidal Sylvia? (Again, not quite: there have been several public pronouncements over the years). No, essentially this was soap opera made respectable for the chattering classes — and certainly it's difficult to put any more charitable interpretation on a headline in a supposedly serious newspaper (*Independent on Sunday*) asserting that "Now we know he loved Sylvia".

I mean, come on Rosie: I know the circulation's in free fall but did anyone seriously suppose that he *didn't* love Sylvia? Detach the blethering about "mystical humanism" courtesy of Master Tom Paulin, and Professor John Carey in the *Sunday Times* suggesting that "to unwind the wonder of these poems would take a book, not a review", and what remains? Well, Ted *in excelsis*. Essence of Ted scraped out of the creative crucible. All the procedural tics and trademarks one always recognised in Ted cranked up to the max. "The Afterbirth" — among the male sex, only Ted could do a title like that straightfaced — is a characteristic piece: all the old elemental symbols (birth, death, dawns and departures); all the mythological trappings (Greece, Egypt, Ancient Briton); even the animal crushed to pulp under the offside rear wheel of the poet's car on the A30.

Nothing wrong with the melodrama that stalks beneath much of this; one quarrels only with the frail foundations on which it's erected. Take the one about "Drawing" ("Drawing calmed you. Your poker infernal pen/Was like a branding iron") or "Dream Life", with its sea "clogged with corpses/Death-camp atrocities, mass amputations". In each the material, the emotion, the circumstance, is just too slight to bear the weight of apocalyptic imagery and the effect is merely portentous.

There are lurking flaws, too, in the quieter, more downbeat side to Hughes which surfaces here and there among the blood baths and the squashed wildlife. "55 Eltisley", for example, is a queer little number, a poem addressed to the couple's first house ("Our first home has forgotten us./I saw when I drove past it/How slight our lives had been/To have left not a trace.") which goes on to suggest that "It confirmed/Your idea of England: part/Nursing home, part morgue/for something partly dying, partly dead." Curiously, given the great oppositions of post-war British poetry, this sounds more than a touch like Philip Larkin — the wistful, elegiac nod, lives sanctified but made smaller by the solidity of place — the difference being that it lacks Larkin's concision, his terseness of thought, whereas Ted gets caught up in some ruminations about how the previous owner died — blood again, the inevitable signature remark.

Ted's at his best, in fact, when he keeps it simple, saying obvious things in quiet, unexaggerated ways. "Fidelity", for instance, is a beautiful account of the early stages of their relationship, lying on a mattress in a top room overlooking Petty Curry. In much the same way "A Short Film" delicately examines a fragment of cine ("It was not meant to hurt") on which Sylvia fleetingly appears.

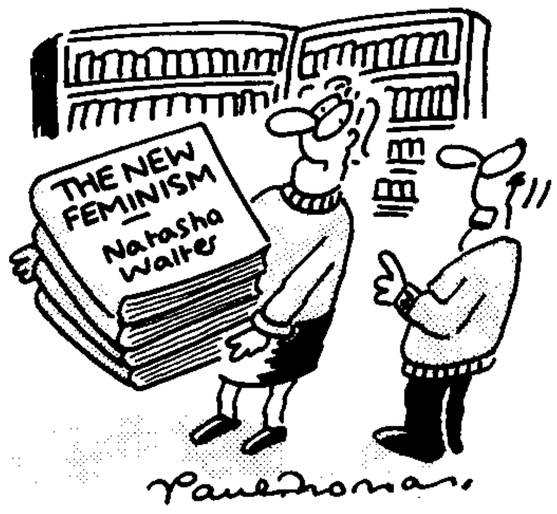
All this has sold 50,000 copies to date, with another 20,000 ordered up and receipts guaranteed to rise in the wake of Hughes' simultaneously scooping of the Whitbread with *Tales From Ovid*. Statistics of this kind are invariably trotted out to support the idea that the British are still, lord love us, a nation of poetry fanciers. I'd mark it down as the usual passion for minor cultural spectacle laced with appetising whiffs of bygone scandal. And early death, of course — in which the nation is particularly interested right now.

As for the poems themselves, rather than the pictures of Ted and Sylvia on their wedding day, there must be more to British poetry than dear old Ted, the eternal spy in the elemental cab, dear old Ted ceaselessly twisting his key in the lock and spilling out the ever diminishing contents of the myth kitty.

BOOKS AND BOOKPERSONS

■ PETER "Eeyore" Straus, Picador's prodigal son, was particularly gratified that Graham Robb not only won the biography category of the Whitbread awards with his life of *Victor Hugo* but was initially the bookies' favourite to take the overall prize.

Little could he have known that Faber & Faber was planning a massive publicity coup for Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid* by arranging the "serialisation" of Hughes's biographical poems about the late



"Want a hand with those, love?"

Mrs Hughes in the *Times* the week before the Whitbread was announced.

Interestingly the editor of the *Times* who acquired serialisation of *Birthday Letters* was also one of the Whitbread adjudicators who gave the overall Whitbread book of the year to the poet laureate's much better *previous* book.

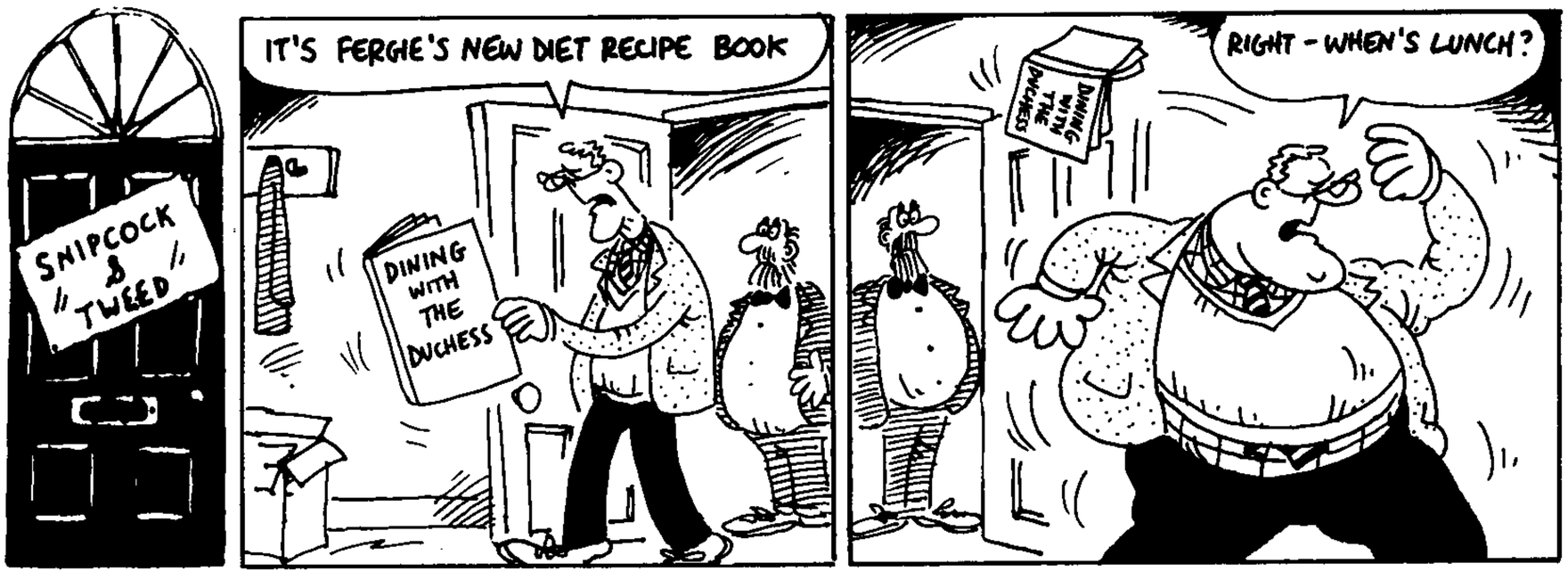
The judges were split on this one. Jonathan Ross and Fay Weldon wanted to give the prize to Jim Crace for his novel about Jesus in the desert; Edwina Currie favoured Robb and *Hugo*. But in the end the arguments of Peter Stothard and Lord Gowrie prevailed and Ted Huge carried off the trophy.

Eeyore, never one to lose a trick, took out his mobile phone as the verdict was announced, and facetiously asked the operator to get him Ovid, clearly a poet with a future. "I always believe in backing new talent, don't I?" he joked. Well, yes. But like most publishers he prefers someone else to have published it first.

□MALCOLM EDWARDS found life at HarperCollins in tandem with William Hague lookalike Stuart Proffit too political and thus accepted the blandishments of Anthony "Skinny" Cheetham to join the Orion Group as managing director of the Orion imprint, the previous incumbent being Fatty's former wife, Rosie.

Malc, displaying a panache with which he hadn't previously been associated, left a message for his former colleagues on the Hammersmith e-mail, an In Memoriam for Mrs Thatcher's and Mr Major's editor.

So,
Farewell then, HarperCollins
Rupert Murdoch always
demanded
A grotesquely impossible
profit
It's a pity you
Misheard him.



■ *MEANWHILE the W.H. SMITH award has raised a few eyebrows. The three judges are Professor John Carey, novelist Hilary Mantel and critic and biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett. When the long list was announced, it turned out that Cape have eight titles on it. Envious publishers are suggesting this has something to do with the fact that Lucy Hughes-Hallett is married to Cape's languid publishing director, Dan "Gentleman" Franklin. This seems unlikely since Faber has an amazing seven titles on the list with no relatives on the panel at all.*

'Bookworm'

footnotes

ABBsolutely Monstrous

ERIC DREWERY

ALL the companies who lost money in the massive explosion which ripped apart an aluminium plant in Dubai five years ago have been compensated by their insurers and are happily working together again. Yet none of the companies will even accept liability for the man who died in the explosion, British engineer Geoffrey Gill.

The plant was built by and for Dubal, an aluminium company owned by the Dubai government; and the main contractor was the Swiss-based multinational Asea Brown Boveri (ABB).

No firm has done better out of the expansion of the British power industry and the "dash for gas" than ABB. Its chief executive in the UK, Eric Drewery, reveals that "in the past three years we have secured more than 50 percent of all UK power station orders" and boasts that "European industrialists have grown envious of the UK's conducive business environment".

Among its recent successes is a contract to build a new gas-fired power station in East Devon, not far from the Axminster home of Geoffrey Gill's family. Mrs Wilhelmina Gill resents the looming presence of ABB. She cannot understand why, with all the new orders and the conducive business environment, the firm can't admit liability or pay proper compensation for the ghastly and painful death of her husband.

Geoffrey Gill, 59, a highly qualified engineer, was sent in to check faulty switchgear in the Dubai plant on 27 October 1993 when he was caught in the explosion. He was badly burnt all over his body and brought back to Britain. He died in agony on 3 November.

Geoffrey Gill, daughter Joanne and wife Wilhelmina

A detailed report by British engineers Ewbank Preece uncovered the most appalling defects in the plant's electrical switchgear. The faults were traced to a batch of defective levers provided for ABB at the Dubai plant by the Belgian firm EIB. EIB later admitted that there was no form of test certification and no record of inspection proceedings ever being applied to the crucial castings.

Two thirds of the levers later tested were rejected due to linear defects and the remainder had "surface porosity". So crude and gross were the defects exposed in the report that the entire testing procedure was overhauled. EIB agreed to replace all levers free of charge. ABB, as the main contractor on the plant, settled claims with Dubal for the damage done by the explosion. Yet it flatly refused to admit liability for the engineer who laid down his life exposing the faults in the first place. A perfunctory letter from ABB's Swiss insurers, Winterhur, on 14 March 1996 announced: "We are prepared to pay £20,000 for the late Mr Gill. The proposal is understood to be a final settlement without any admission of liability." The offer, said the letter, would stay open for 60 days. No negotiations, no further discussion. The £20,000 offered is less than a fifth of the likely compensation if negligence were proved and Mr Gill's loss of earnings taken into account.

Mrs Gill tells the *Eye*: "The money offer is bad enough. But it is not the point. The point is that the contractors admit liability to each other and pay each other. But they won't even admit liability for their dead worker."

The offer was turned down. Shocked and disillusioned, Mrs Gill and her daughter Joanne have decided to sue EIB in Belgium. The cost of translating all the documents alone will eat up their meagre savings. ABB's turnover in the UK in 1996 was £1.7bn.

NEWS FROM EWLOE

North Wales Child Abuse Tribunal

■ TWO whole days of the tribunal at Ewloe (26 and 27 January) were taken up with the evidence of a former police officer who had been repeatedly accused of abusing boys in care at North Wales homes.

The former officer vigorously denied all the allegations. His denials did not stop at refuting allegations of abuse from six former inmates of the homes. He was just as vigorous in his denials of relatively trivial suggestions about his visits to the homes.

The former officer was first interviewed by police on these matters in January 1992 when, in a detailed statement, he said he had made only one visit to the Bryn Estyn home between 1981 and 1983. The tribunal chairman, Sir Ronald Waterhouse, asked about evidence that he had visited the home 15 times.

Q: It's a big discrepancy isn't it? Why is there such a big discrepancy? To say you can only remember one is very positive. If you had actually gone 15 times, that's very wide of the mark isn't it?

A: At the time of making that statement, sir, I was distressed... I didn't really have my full mind on it.

Sir Ronald intervened again when the former officer said he could not remember anything about the late Peter Howarth, former deputy head of Bryn Estyn, who died while serving a long prison sentence for abusing boys in the home.

Q: I find it rather surprising that you can't remember Mr Howarth. The evidence is that he in effect ran the school... and that he was the effective person on the scene giving the orders?

A: I was not aware of that, sir.

Again and again the witness categorically contradicted the evidence of former staff at the homes on these matters. Asked about the evidence of Christina Linden, a former teacher at Bryn Estyn, that it was common talk at the school that he had been a regular visitor, he replied "she is totally mistaken about that or lying indeed".

Asked about the evidence of Alison Taylor who said she had seen him transferring golf clubs from his car into Peter Howarth's, he replied "Mrs Taylor is telling a pack of lies".

Asked about Michael Bradley, who said he had heard Peter Howarth calling a man in his flat who had the same Christian name as the former officer, he replied: "I have never given my first name to anyone to describe me, and that is complete fabrication".

Asked about the evidence of another former member of Bryn Estyn staff, Paul Wilson, that the former officer was a regular visitor to the school "at all times of the day, daytime, the afternoon, evenings and sometimes at weekends" the witness replied: "Complete and utter fabrication".

Asked about the evidence of a policeman's wife, who said she'd seen the former officer in plain clothes at Bryn Estyn "getting some golf clubs out of the back of your car", he replied: "Totally incorrect, sir."

Asked about the statement of Roger Owen Griffiths, the proprietor of another boys' home, Gatewen, that the former officer would "visit the school and sometimes have a glass of sherry or whisky there with him", he replied: "Totally and utterly untrue, sir".

A curious feature of the two days' evidence was that the former officer could give no explanation as to why so many people, many of them members of staff or casual observers, should lie about him. He told Gerald Elias QC, counsel to the inquiry: "The witnesses are lying about me, sir."

Q: And there's not one piece of evidence that you can give this tribunal as to why they may be lying about you?

A: I have no idea, sir. I have no idea at all.

RUCK OFF

■ WHEN journalist David Merchant wrote an article in *Lloyd's List* asking mildly if the big Bermuda-registered insurance firm Mutual Risk Management had switched auditors to get more favourable tax advice, all hell broke loose.

A libel writ was threatened, and *Lloyd's List* called in its legal "experts", the prestigious London firm of Peter Carter Fuck & Partners who advised the paper to grovel.

Grovel it did, very low indeed. The journalist was furious. He promptly published exactly the same story in his own financial newsletter. Down came the libel threats once more, this time from Congers, Dill and Pearman, probably the biggest lawyers in Bermuda. "*Lloyd's List* have apologised — so must you" was the message. Merchant pointed out that his facts were correct and stood by his story. There was no apology — and no writ either.

WOOLLEY BULLIED

Barrister Rupert Pardoe reckoned he had the killer punch when Michael Woolley went into the witness box at Bournemouth crown court to give evidence for the prosecution in the trial of Roland Buckland, who was up on a dangerous driving charge.

"You're a perjurer," Mr Pardoe told the astonished witness.

"No, I'm not," stammered Mr Woolley, a managing director.

"Oh yes you are," pressed the barrister. "Moreover, you have a conviction for blackmail in 1973 at the Old Bailey."

"No I haven't," said Mr Woolley. "I haven't been convicted of anything in my entire life."

NO REDRESS: Mike Woolley

On and on went the exchange all through the afternoon of 17 December. Mr Pardoe went on insisting that Mr Woolley was lying to the court and that his previous conviction proved that his evidence wasn't worth a row of beans. Mr Woolley went on insisting that his record was completely clean.

The judge, Mr Recorder Mercer, told the jury that whatever Mr Woolley might say, the blackmail conviction remained the information before the court. Neither he, nor Mr Pardoe, nor the prosecution barrister, Christopher Amis, nor either set of solicitors made the slightest effort to have the information checked.

As soon as the court closed, Michael Woolley stormed down to the police station and demanded to know how and why he was being saddled with a bogus conviction. The police checked on its computer. Whoops! Mr Woolley was quite right. He had no convictions. The man convicted in 1973, also apparently called Michael Woolley, had a different birthday, different coloured eyes, different sized hands and was 5'10" high while Mr Woolley is barely 5'6".

The next day in court everyone was full of apologies. Mr Woolley had been abused for a whole afternoon on the basis of information which was entirely false. Ironically, the trial was eventually stopped on a dubious technicality and defendant Roland Buckland (who was alleged by several witnesses to have driven dangerously away from Mr Woolley's shop) got off.

Mr Woolley complained to the police and the crown prosecution service (CPS). On 20 January he got a letter from Supt B.B. Hesketh, of Dorset police. "I have discovered that human error by a member of my staff led to previous convictions attributable to another person being passed to the Crown Prosecution Service as belonging to yourself." The procedures, promised the superintendent, had been changed "to ensure a double check". He apologised.

Three days later came another apologetic letter from John Revell, of the local CPS. "While recognising from the outset the fact that what happened was extremely unfortunate, we do not consider that there is any obligation on us to pay any compensation." The state of the law on reputation appears to be as follows. If an ordinary person wrongly and publicly accuses someone of being a convicted felon, the damages against him are likely to be huge. If the police or CPS do it, they don't have to pay a penny.

See you later, motivator

■ THE government's problems with trade unions are on display at the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), which organises the country's driving tests.

About 900 of the country's 1,100 driving examiners are members of a TUC-affiliated union called PCS. Not long ago a few examiners formed IPDE, a breakaway organisation friendly to the management but not affiliated to the TUC and not even registered as a trade union. Naturally, IPDE was instantly recognised by the Tories.

When Labour was elected, PCS leaders wrote to government ministers asking them to derecognise IPDE. Transport minister Glenda Jackson, a quarter of whose election expenses were met by a trade union, replied that union recognition was "a matter for the DSA", not for her. She did nothing.

Not all DSA executives are enamoured of the historic relationship between Labour and the TUC. When John Prescott took over his new enormous department in May, he called an all-London staff meeting and pontificated for an hour and forty minutes on the importance of improving relations between unions and management. The speech was put on video and, on Prescott's insistence, sent to all agencies in the department for viewing by all managers and staff.

A curious memo then went out on 21 July "to all area managers and heads of branches" at the Driving Services Agency from Sue Davis, of "internal communications", as follows:

"Subject: John Prescott's address to DETR staff in London on 7th July 1997. I have sent a copy of the video of the above to each area manager and have two copies available in Internal Communications...

"Word of Caution: This video is not very motivating. Bernard Herdan (chief executive) has asked that this is not shown to staff."

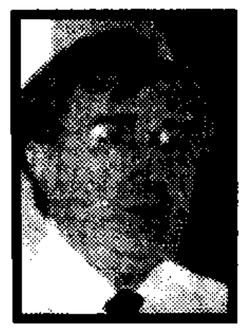
High Principals

THE COMPLETE ANGLIA

■ THE influence of the Jenkins family at Anglia Polytechnic University spreads further than suggested in the last *Eye*.

Young Jonathan Jenkins, who in 1995 got a job as a lecturer in a department of the university's Business School where his father, Professor Hugh Jenkins, was head, had already been taken on, and rejected at another part of the same university.

Mr David Cropper, who was head of professional accountancy courses at the university's Cambridge site, tells the *Eye*: "I employed Mr Jenkins as a part-time lecturer in financial management. He worked for the latter part of one academic year and for the whole of the next. A number of students told me they would not be returning to the courses if he continued as a lecturer. He kept missing lectures and the ones he gave were below professional standard. I told him I could not renew his contract, and he left."



TWO PROFS: Hugh Jenkins and John Davies

A few months later Jonathan Jenkins was taken on as a lecturer at the university's department of management development. His job was later declared full-time by the department head, his father. As soon as the last *Eye* hit the streets Jonathan Jenkins went off sick.

■ How did Jenkins senior get *his* job? Not very long ago, while lecturing in Wales, he contacted his old friend Ron Stenning, who was then head of management development at Anglia's Business School. The team of Jenkins and Stenning was well known at academic conferences where they presented papers on "organisational behaviour". Stenning welcomed his old friend with open arms and Jenkins was taken on as a principal lecturer. Not much later he was promoted to be head of management development. This appointment was approved by the then head of the Business School, another old friend of Jenkins' — Prof John Davies.

Not very much later Mr Stenning moved sideways, and the post of head of management development became vacant. There were four applicants, including Prof Jenkins. All were rejected by the interview panel. Another shortlist was drawn up, again including Jenkins, who was rejected again. The job went to an external candidate: Dr Cyril Levicki, who had a doctorate from the London Business School.

Then a curious thing happened. Though Dr Levicki made several visits to both university sites and got to know members of staff, who liked him, he was never given a contract. After several weeks of trying to get written assurances about his future, Dr Levicki finally withdrew. On 16 January 1995 he wrote an apology to all staff blaming "the long delay between offer and starting date".

An appointment was made without further advertisement or shortlist. You can probably guess the name of the new head of department: Prof Hugh Jenkins. Not much later still, Prof Davies retired as head of the Business School. The name of his successor will not surprise you either: Prof Jenkins.

PS: The retirement of Prof Davies was early but brief. He is back on the university payroll.

LANKESTER BUMMER

■ SIR Tim Lankester learned of the joint advantages of public and private enterprise years ago when he was "seconded" from prime minister Margaret Thatcher's private office to the big city merchant bankers Warburgs.

He has been putting this experience into practice in his new job as director of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). His £82,000 a year is obviously not enough for a former very senior civil servant — so he has snapped up two part-time directorships at Commercial Union (£13,388) and at health company Smith and Nephew (£11,000).

Not many SOAS students earn that much, so it was obviously time for Sir Tim to crack down on their high life. Just before Christmas he told them he would no longer allow them free use of the main University of London library. Angry students occupied SOAS's own library in protest. After threatening a court injunction and a police eviction, Sir Tim finally threw in the towel and agreed to another 550 free library tickets.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

WHO SAID last year: "These people have not taken a risk in their lives: they have inherited it. That is offensive to those who fought and took risks"? Who also attacked the bosses of privatised industries for making "risk free fortunes just by being in the right place at the right time"? And who described his political philosophy as: "I believe in fairness, social justice... But that does not mean you have not to care about efficiency, value for money"?

No offshore prizes. This outspoken champion of fairness and fervent opponent of "offensive" inherited wealth was none other than the minister for tax avoidance and beneficiary of multi-million Bourgeois largesse, Geoffrey Robinson.

Needless to say, in his interview with the *Observer* soon after Labour's election victory there was no time to mention the entirely fair and socially just Orion Trust, set up in Guernsey the previous year, from which he and his family benefit — risk and tax free. Similarly it somehow escaped his memory that he had inherited the bulk of his close Belgian friend Joska Bourgeois' £35m fortune three years earlier.

But then clearly there was a lot on Robinson's mind in May last year. And not just his friend Gordon Brown's plans to crack down on offshore trusts, curb tax avoidance, close inheritance tax loopholes and hit windfall profits.

There was setting up the "blind trust" into which all his onshore interests could be placed in keeping with ministerial rules. This trust of course excluded the Orion Trust — for the same reason that he omitted to disclose its existence in the register of MPs' interests — because he was merely a "discretionary" beneficiary. Be it one who had previously received tax-free payments from the trust and could make "suggestions" to its oh so independent Guernsey trustees that they were often only too happy to accept. Such as buying shares in his engineering company TransTec and beloved soccer club Coventry City.

Clearly the choice of trustees for the Geoffrey Robinson Personal Settlement was crucial. There should be no room for criticism that they were mere ciphers or stooges prepared to do his bidding but truly independent. Like the little known Richmond Corporate Services on Guernsey, which represents Orion and probably provides its trustees.

By a remarkable coincidence Richmond is linked to a nominee company, Orion Nominees, which acts for its coy clients and is one of its two shareholders with director Alan Chick, who negotiated the Coventry share deal. By another coincidence Orion Trust Limited was formed in the British Virgin Islands on the same day in 1988 as Orion Nominees. And by a further coincidence Craigavon, which holds the Orion shares in Coventry City, is also registered in the BVI.

BVI companies have a great advantage over those registered in Guernsey. There is no requirement to tell the BVI authorities who is the beneficial owner. So the Guernsey authorities would not need to be told that a trust linked to a Labour MP and possible minister was involved.

Doubtless the irate burghers of Guernsey — upset by home secretary Jack Straw's unilateral decision to clean up their act — will be poring through company files for evidence of MPs' offshore connections.

So having established such a successful relationship in Guernsey, it is not surprising after great thought and an extensive selection process that Robinson came up with two ideal candidates as trustees for his "blind trust". His trusted, longtime associate Brenda Price, a Coventry accountant, and a Peter Davis. No doubt by another of those remarkable coincidences, a former boardroom colleague of Price at local radio station Mercia Sound was a local solicitor named, Peter Davis. Presumably no relation.

Clearly they will ensure that Robinson is kept completely deaf, dumb as well as blind to what is going on in TransTec, Coventry City (where Price is now a director, representing Robinson and/or Orion) and the *New Statesman* (director: B. Price).

For as Robinson told the *Observer*: "I believe in... caring for the underdog and a sense of public service. But that does not mean you have not to care... about running things on commercial lines. Otherwise you let everybody down". How true!

FORMER British & Commonwealth chairman and/or chief executive John Gunn is mounting an unusual if not unique defence to the disqualification proceedings being brought against him by the Department of Timidity & Inaction.

Gunn maintains that he is not unfit to be a director and was not to blame for the collapse of B&C in 1990 because he left the running of the financial services group and its deadly Atlantic Computers subsidiary to others. Like Ernest Saunders at Guinness, Gunn maintains he was busy on other grander matters and relied on others to run the companies.

So contrary to what the titles executive chairman or chief executive and a salary of £740,000 might have suggested, to shareholders and the City Gunn was really not in charge and not fully informed. The Atlantic "black hole" which caused the B&C collapse came as a complete shock.

How long has this been going on? Why did nobody tell me? These no doubt characterise some of Gunn's reactions to the Atlantic fiasco which required a £550m write-off and bankrupted B&C. It may be several months before it becomes clear whether this novel "helpless chief executive" defence works. If it does — it didn't with Saunders — then highly paid suits throughout the City will be celebrating a new "get out of jail" card.

A PREOCCUPIED Lord Moyne was espied in Soho recently seemingly unaware of the temptation surrounding him. His concerns were clearly not with the sins of the flesh but the sins of his Swedish friends who raped and pillaged the investment company Trustor of almost £50m using Moyne as their front.

The Swedish investigation appears to be moving in slow motion after a burst of activity last November during which Moyne volunteered to deny any wrongdoing. Inquiries are being made in several jurisdictions tracing the money and some of the players, such as Joachim Posener who is believed to be in Israel.

By staying away from Sweden — unlike his friend Peter Mattsson, since released after a spell in custody — Moyne may be safe. It is not clear whether he committed offences in Sweden as the money was hijacked after it was transferred to London on the instructions of chairman Moyne and his partner, managing director Lindsay Smallbone.

"This £100 fine. Is it tax deductable?"

But the former Jonathan Guinness could still have problems in Britain as could Smallbone. The Serious Farce Office's initial view is that Moyne at least could potentially have committed up to three criminal offences here including conspiracy to defraud.

It has emerged that Barclays checked each time with Moyne before it made a transfer from the Trustor account into the accounts of his co-conspirators. This makes it very difficult for Moyne to claim he was unaware of the pillaging by the unscrupulous Swedes he now blames for misleading him and Smallbone. The less than rich Moyne also personally benefited — maybe to the tune of up to £1m. Furthermore, it is an offence to conspire in Britain to commit a crime abroad, so Moyne could be held liable for the theft initiated in Sweden.

And Trustor is only the most recent Moyne business to attract attention from the authorities. There have also been investigations by the DTI and Scotland Yard into the closed Access to Justice and the grounded Tajik Air. However, the big question is: if the Swedes do not charge Moyne, will the SFO, given that there are no victims in Britain, only victimisers?

THE WORD is that the relaunched *Sunday Business* is planning to kick off with an exclusive first interview with Bahamas-based currency trader and man of mystery Joe Lewis. By a strange coincidence Britain's richest man (according to the *Sunday Times*, that is) is a good friend to the equally reclusive if less mysterious brothers Barclay who just happen to own *Sunday Business*.

No doubt therefore this will be a fearless, frank, no questions barred interview rather than a fawning, hagiographic exercise in financial *arslikhan*. Perhaps we will at last get answers to such questions as: just how much money Lewis did make before he left Britain sometime after 1979 (*Eye* 924)? Or why the Bank of England appeared so interested in Lewis's role as the major shareholder in Union Discount? And why other major players in world currency markets such as George Soros say Joe Who?

But then again, perhaps not.

'Slicker'

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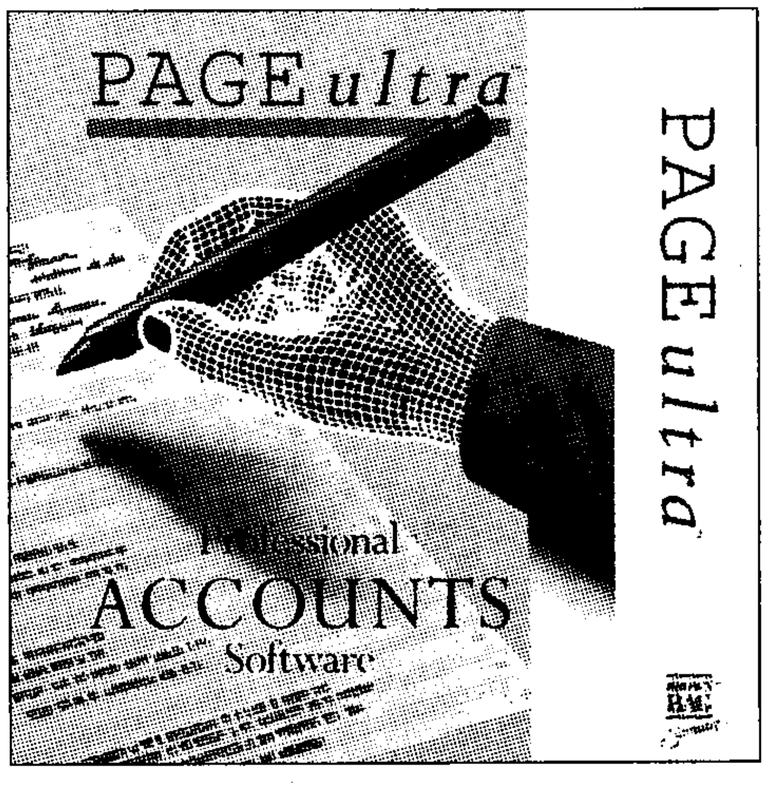

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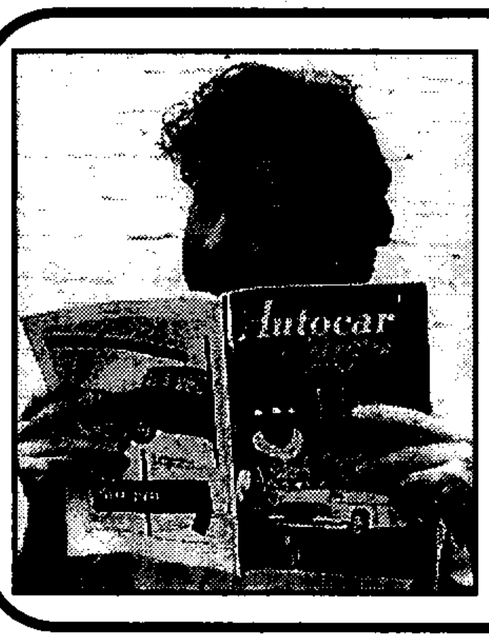

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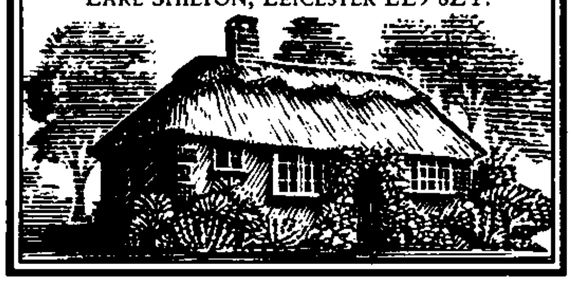

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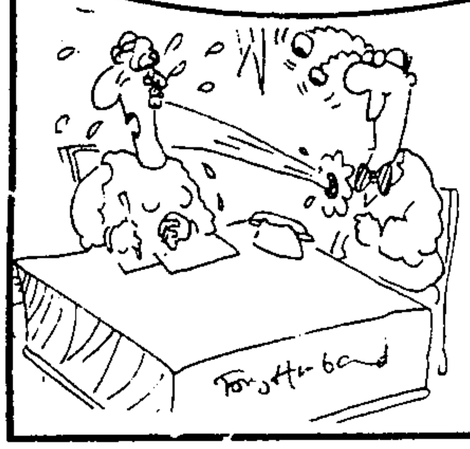

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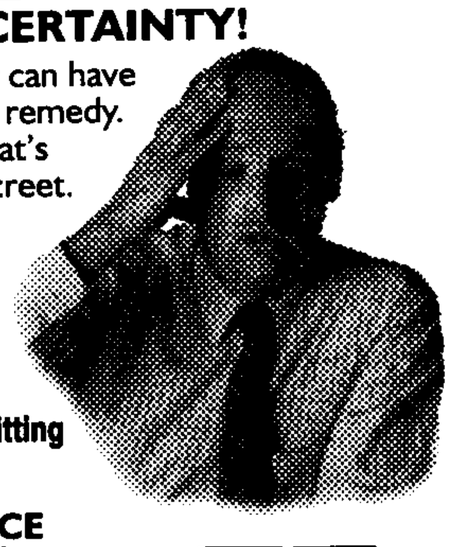

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❤ **TO NAGANO** with Love....Chocks Away!!

❤ **DARLING NELLY BEAR** — big fat Valentine smacker! All my love NOO.

❤ **JACKIE WALTON** — please scan the Eye regularly for any future messages in Eye Love. Miss you loads already. With much love DAVID.

❤ **LET US ROLL** all our strength and all/ Our sweetness up into one ball,/And tear our pleasures with rough strife/Through the iron gates of life.

❤ **DARLING ANGUS** — Happy Fifth Anniversary! All my love, H.

❤ **SPARROWFART** — I love you. There is a "Bundle" waiting to spend a lifetime with you. Are you up for it? Yes or Aye will do.

❤ **FOUR YOU** — still not piste off — and venetian blind with love.

❤ **OH DOCTOR NOOKIE!** Feel my chest, My heart's a pulsing blob. And with my hands I long to test YOUR loving organ's throb. Be my corny valentine! All my gorgeous love, Kate.

❤ **LYGFAB?** Waly, whenever, wherever. Forests same worldover. BROWNEYES.

❤ **GAV** — let's make it work. I love you, T.

❤ **DJ DISCOBUN** — great to BEE back with you.

❤ **GET 'EM OFF** ratlike. Gorgeous hunk.

❤ **MRS M LOVES** Mr B lifetime. xxxx.

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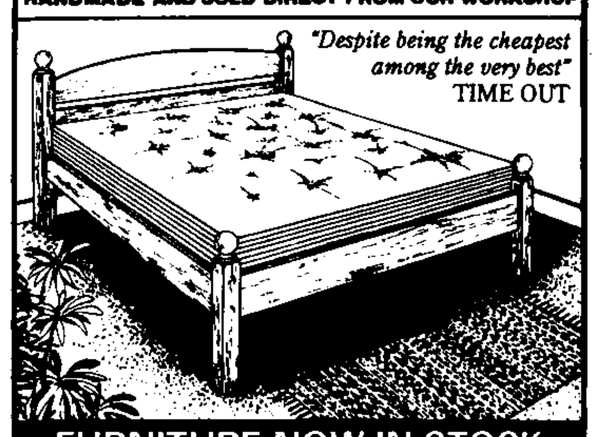

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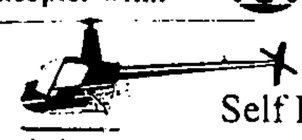

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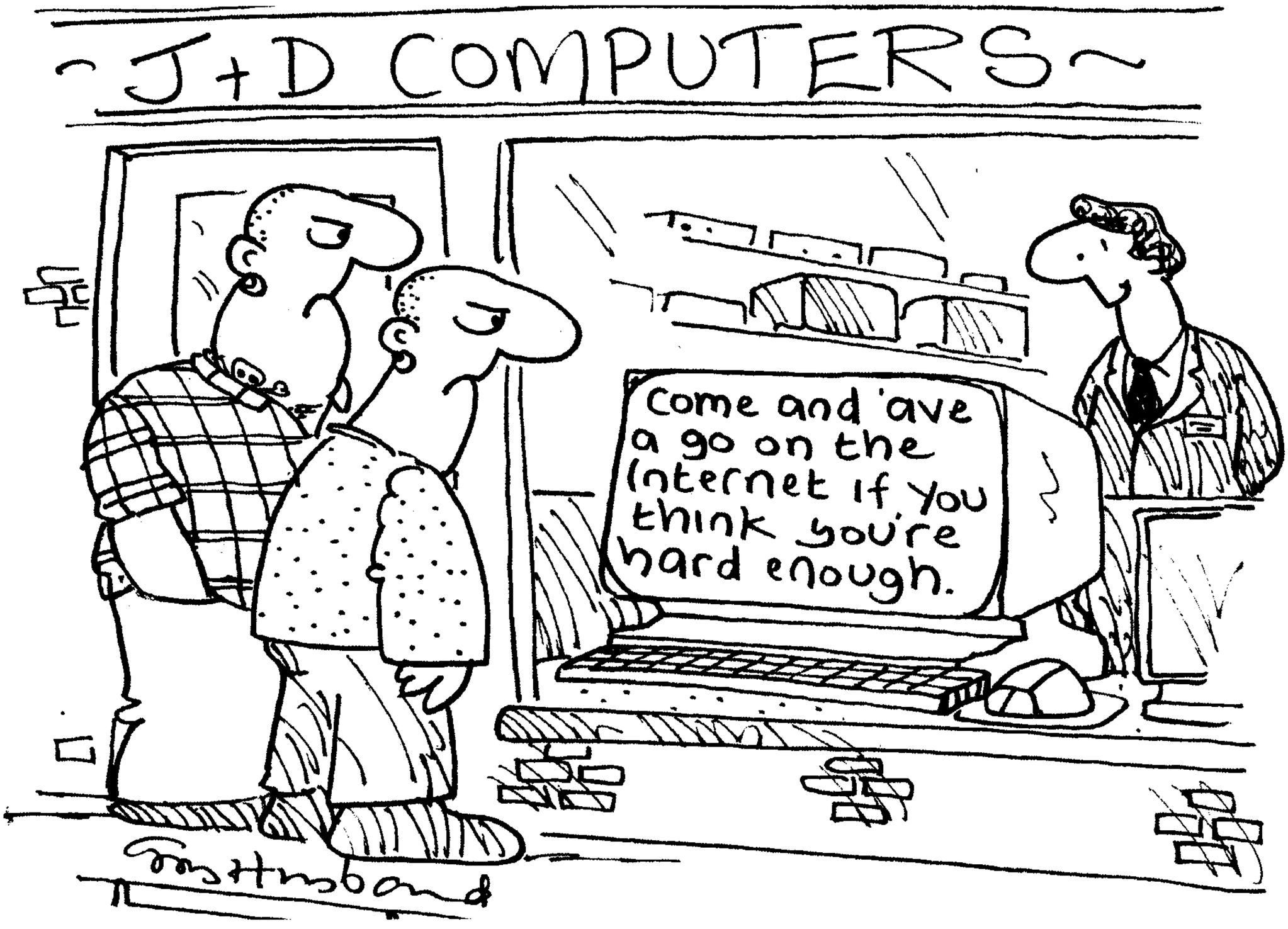

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